



Maryland  
Hospital Association

February 9, 2022

To: The Honorable William C. Smith Jr., Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Re: Letter of Information - Senate Bill 280 - Interim and Temporary Protective Orders -  
Electronic Filing and Video Conferencing Hearings

Dear Chair Smith:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 280.

Across the state, there are hospital-based programs with specialty trained health care workers, such as forensic nurse examiners and social workers, who care for survivors of [domestic violence](#), [sexual assault](#), and other forms of violence. Safe discharge planning is a key focus for patients and health care workers caring for them. Currently, staff in hospital-based programs help patients print forms if they express an interest in filing a protective order after discharge. These proactive measures promote a safe discharge planning process and potentially prevent readmission.

SB 280 would allow a patient to file an electronic petition for an interim or temporary protective order. The bill allows the patient to attend a virtual hearing at the hospital. Some hospital-based programs may have the physical space, equipment, and staff to assist with this process, yet there are several considerations before implementing this process statewide.

Maryland hospitals are experiencing a staggering workforce crisis. This process would presumably require training to understand the process, risks, and benefits of requesting a protective order. Additionally, supplemental staff could be needed depending on the length of time required to complete the petition and/or participate in the hearing.

There are hospitals that have the resources and staff to implement SB 280, however, it may not be practical for other hospitals. We support the intent of the legislation and welcome the opportunity to work with the sponsor and advocates on this issue.

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