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Baltimore County

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on Children, Youth,
and Families

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake
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TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN SB 280-Interim and Temporary Protective Orders

Domestic violence continues to have devastating impacts on the livelihood and well being of the American people. One in four women and one in seven men will be victims of domestic violence at least once in their lifetime. Survivors of domestic violence have higher rates of mortality and are more likely to attempt suicide, abuse alcohol, and drugs, develop comorbid psychiatric conditions, contract sexually transmitted infections, and deliver low-weight babies. Beyond the detrimental impacts on survivors, domestic violence also affects the larger community, particularly children. Children who witness domestic violence often suffer from acute emotional trauma and are more likely to become perpetrators of domestic violence in the future. As a result, each year, the federal government spends over 55 billion dollars on dealing with the effects of childhood exposure to domestic violence. The epidemic of domestic violence extends to Maryland with 34.4% of women and 28.8% of men in Maryland experiencing interpersonal violence.

An important component to the national response to combat domestic violence is the implementation of domestic violence protection orders which allow survivors of intimate partner violence to request the assistance of courts to ensure they are protected from ongoing domestic violence. Studies that evaluate the efficacy of domestic violence prevention orders have demonstrated statistically significant associations between states that have domestic violence prevention order laws and a decrease in intimate partner homicide. Despite the efficacy of domestic violence protective orders, barriers to filing a protective order leave survivors vulnerable to ongoing violence. This bill seeks to increase access to protective orders by authorizing petitioners who are receiving treatment at a hospital to file for an interim or temporary protective order electronically and further requiring courts or commissioners that receive this petition to hold a hearing through video conferencing.

This bill enables survivors of domestic violence who are seeking an interim or temporary protection order to do so electronically from the hospital. They may be there as a result of an injury sustained from intimate partner violence or for any other reason. Clients of domestic violence programs - and you will hear from some today - tell us that they feel more comfortable disclosing to their health care professionals than others and that they feel safe pursuing protections from a hospital.

You will also hear about This bill establishes this connection and protects survivors of domestic violence and their larger communities from the pernicious illness of domestic violence. I would like to ask for your support of SB 280 so we can protect the residents of Maryland. Thank you.

¹ "Domestic Violence Services - SAFE & Domestic Violence Program at GBMC." n.d.

¹ "Impact of Domestic Violence on Health." n.d. VAWnet.Org. National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

¹ “Exposure to Domestic Violence Costs US Government \$55 Billion Each Year: Exposure to Domestic Violence Carries Long-Term Consequences for Both Children and Society.” n.d. ScienceDaily.

¹ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (2019). The national intimate partner and sexual violence survey: 2010-2012 State Report. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention