



The Honorable William Smith & Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Chairperson, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairperson Smith and Judicial Proceedings Committee,

The Frederick County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) writes in support of Senate Bill 429 Stalking: Penalties. The Frederick County DVCC was formed in 2020 in order to increase collaboration and communication among criminal and civil justice stakeholders, service providers, and community members with the goal to reduce and prevent domestic violence in Frederick County.

The DVCC is in support of Senate Bill 429 because Maryland must join the majority of states that have a felony designation and enhanced penalties for repeat offenders, and those stalking a victim while under a court order of protection. According to Dr. Jacqueline Campbell in her study “Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide,” in 85% of attempted and 76% of completed intimate partner femicides, the victim had been stalked in the year preceding the crime. Additionally, 54% of female domestic violence homicide victims *reported* stalking to police before they were killed by their stalkers.

In order to prevent intimate partner homicide, and bring peace and justice to victims of stalking, Maryland must respond to and deter this abhorrent behavior. Enhanced penalties and the felony designation dramatically expand the ability of the State to protect victims and incapacitate repeat offenders and those who stalk in violation of a protective order, before they murder their target.

Handwritten signature of Brett Engler in black ink.

Brett Engler, *Esq.*

Frederick County State’s Attorney’s Office
Chair, Frederick County DVCC

Handwritten signature of Jessica Fitzwater in black ink.

Jessica Fitzwater

County Council Member, District 4
Vice-Chair, Frederick County DVCC