



BILL NO: Senate Bill 819
TITLE: Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services - Executive Director – Appointment
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
HEARING DATE: March 1, 2022
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 819.**

Senate Bill 819 would require senate confirmation of the Governor’s appointment for the Executive Director of the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth & Victim Services (GOCPYVS). Previously known as the Governor’s Office of Crime Control & Prevention (GOCCP), this agency is relied upon to administer many grants that support services for survivors of domestic violence in Maryland. This includes both state and federal funding. Programs that rely on GOCPYVS to administer these grant dollars provide lifesaving services include emergency shelter, 24-hour hotlines, advocates, legal services, and counseling services.

GOCPYVS has grown from a small advisory group in the Governor’s office to a large and continuously growing agency. It has resisted legislative oversight, failed to file mandated reports, and refused financial audit directives. The Maryland General Assembly directed an [evaluation of GOCPYVS](#) on April 28, 2021, in response to ongoing concerns. The evaluation made several recommendations including that the Maryland General Assembly consider requiring that future GOCPYVS executive directors be appointed with advice and consent of the Senate. The report pointed to GOCPYVS’ budget size, its critical role in allocating and monitoring grants across the State, and its organizational complexity. It noted that the GOCPYVS budget is larger than 9 of Maryland’s 20 principal departments, and its total staff size exceeds 2 of the principal departments.

Requiring senate confirmation of the Governor’s appointment for the Executive Director of GOCPYVS is part of a critical checks and balances system that our state, its citizens, victims, and victim services programs depend upon. Due to the lack of transparency and accountability within GOCPYVS combined with their seminal role in administering grant dollars that domestic violence programs depend on, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on SB 819.**

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