



ANTHONY B. COVINGTON

State's Attorney for Charles County

January 25, 2022

Maryland House Judiciary Committee
Luke Clippinger, *Chair*
House Office Building, Room 101
Annapolis, MD 21401 – 1991

Re: Favorable Report for House Bill 148

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Committee:

Maryland's current stalking statute is outdated with today's technology and common forms of communications. Our antiquated law that does not take into consideration electronic communications and electronic means of tracking and locating victims. Maryland is one of only two states that hasn't addressed the most common forms of electronic or cyberstalking.

When we look further at domestic violence homicides, 76% of women who were murdered by an intimate partner were stalked first, while 85% of women who survived a murder attempt had been previously stalked. These crimes aren't happening in a vacuum, many of these victims have sought protective orders and help from law enforcement yet that doesn't end the stalking or the abuse. In fact 54% of female homicide victims had reported being stalked to law enforcement prior to being killed by their stalker.

Outside of increased risks of homicide, stalking victims suffer higher rates of depression and anxiety, approximately 37% of stalking victims meet the diagnostic criteria for PTSD and 1 in 7 victims of stalking have been forced to move because of the stalker's behavior. Despite these very real long term impacts on our victims we are often left telling our victims we cannot charge as the stalking they experienced occurred through surveillance cameras, GPS monitoring or electronic communications.

Maryland must do better, we must protect our victims from today's forms of electronic and cyberstalking behaviors. I urge a favorable return of this bill.

Thank you,

K.A. Marsh

Kathryn A. Marsh

Special Victims Liaison, Assistant State's
Attorney

Statistics come from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence