



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB110
Criminal Law - Stalking- Penalties
Statement in SUPPORT

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon and members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 110. HB110 will alter the penalties for stalking if the victim had a protective order in effect against the defendant at the time of the offense, or if the defendant had previously been convicted of stalking.

Domestic violence and other violent crimes, particularly crimes committed against women, often have prior stalking incidents. Currently, Maryland is the only state without enhanced penalties for stalking. Stalking is also not classified as a crime of violence in Maryland, although it is statistically heavily correlated with abuse and murder.¹

Because stalking usually involves other non-criminal behavior, it is often regarded as a criminal misdemeanor, which only carries a 5-year maximum sentence and \$5,000 fine in Maryland. HB110 would alter this penalty to a 10-year sentence and \$10,000 fine. HB110's straightforward language mirrors other enhancement statutes in Maryland, altering the previous law by doubling both the sentencing time and the fine.

HB110 also ensures that stalking is penalized if (1) the defendant had a protective order against them at the time of the incident or (2) the defendant has previously been convicted of stalking in Maryland or another state.

Maryland is the only state without enhanced penalties for stalking. By enhancing penalties for stalking, HB110 could protect victims and align Maryland's penalties with other jurisdictions.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill, and I respectfully request a favorable report on HB110.

¹ U.S Department of Justice, Factors Associated with Violence in Stalking and Obsessional Harassment Cases:
<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/factors-associated-violence-stalking-and-obsessional-harassment>