

**The Honorable Luke Clippinger & Members of the House
Judicial Committee Chairperson, House Judicial Committee**
Room 101 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairperson Clippinger & Committee Members,

My name is Sarah Pitt. I am twenty-eight years old and a local resident of St. Mary's County. I work as a Management Analyst for the Department of the Navy at the Patuxent River Naval Airbase. Along with my full-time position, I have continued my academic career as an undergraduate student at University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC), pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Information Management Systems. My siblings and I were raised in a nurturing home, where my parents taught us to hold true to strong ethical values throughout life's undertakings. Moreover, through suffering the tragic and sudden loss of my oldest sister, Lauren Pitt September 3, 2015. Although my family and I live with this void in our hearts, we continue to carry on Lauren's legacy through patience, compassion, and perseverance.

As a victim of Domestic Violence and (cyber) Stalking, I feel it is not only my responsibility, but completely necessary that I disclose the dysfunctional and insidious nature of my experiences with the Defendant in support of House Bill 148 (Criminal Law/ Stalking/ Definition) and House Bill 110 (Criminal Law/ Stalking/ Penalties). In 2019, the Defendant (ex-boyfriend) exposed a violent and unpredictable disposition that has left me, still to this day, in constant fear and anxiety for my loved ones and myself. In order to safely, regulate the issue at hand, I filed for a Final Protection Order (FPO) against the Defendant in August 2019. However, after his jail release in August 30, 2019, which he served for violation of FPO and false statement to officer, the Defendant still managed to neglect the law and systematically violate the FPO throughout a series of tactics.

What I thought would become a path to reclaim my life balance and peace, had drastically escalated to months of vandalism, blackmail, manipulation, (cyber) stalking, and endless harassment. All of which, owing to the Defendants constant knowledge of my location and (endless) unsolicited communication through electronic devices and applications. In addition to the Defendants ongoing pattern of unwanted contact and repeated acts of intimidation, he continued to threaten my future and livelihood.

As conflicting as it may sound, I felt that succumbing to the Defendant's requests and living a secret life as his hostage was the only way I could protect what was left of my dignity and freedom. I was constantly torn between seeking justice and suffering the repercussions, he threatened me with, for doing so. Each time I warned him that I would report him to the police if he did not leave me alone, he would tell me that I would be laughed at by the court and "If he goes down, I go down with him." Whereas other times he would threaten to commit suicide if I ever reported him to the police and that was something, "I would have to live with." Overall, the Defendant was beyond erratic and incomprehensible, all of which has left me in a state of constant fear. Even more, after months of drowning in a toxic sludge of brutality and dysfunction, I began to isolate myself from the people I trust the most. I even became fearful of those who would actually provide all the guidance and support to mandate the situation.

Despite my refusals and various efforts to block all communication with the Defendant, the stalking, threats, and harassment escalated to an unimaginable level. He would continually threaten to, and actually come to my location, which eventually led me to discover the *first* hidden tracker phone the Defendant had taped to the bumper of my vehicle, December 21, 2019. However, despite my discovery and removal of the tracker phone (he admitted to placing on my vehicle), the Defendant's constant knowledge of my location continued as well as the harassment.

The Defendants ability to generate alternate telephone numbers and social media accounts in order maintain his contact with me had accumulated to approximately 200 blocked phone numbers, ~60,000 text messages between his primary and alternate phone numbers and ~20 false social media accounts. With that said, I finally decided to take control of the Defendants ability to contact me through his alternate phone numbers by changing my mobile number (twice), but the Defendant continued to violate the FPO though generating false social media accounts, where he would frequently comment on my location.

On Saturday, June 6, 2020, my vehicle, which previously belonged to my late sister, Lauren was vandalized; the driver side-view mirror looked as if it had been punched off, the back windshield wiper was snapped from its assembly, and the entire

driver side of the vehicle had been keyed. When I looked inside of my vehicle, I saw that my rear-view mirror had been broken off my windshield. The rear-view mirror and the items that were hanging from it were nowhere to be found, including a keepsake pendent with a braid of my sister, Lauren's hair locked inside that was gifted to me when she passed away. I am desolate, heartbroken, and completely enraged over the damage and loss of what is now, a collection of sentimental objects that meant everything to me. Nevertheless, my friends and I were convinced the Defendant was not only responsible for the vandalism, but was somehow tracking my location again, given his constant knowledge of my whereabouts. That is when we discovered, yet another hidden tracker phone wedged in between two components under my vehicle. That day, I reached my limit and finally built up the courage to report the incident to the police, but the harassment did not stop there.

In order to sustain protection by law upon the (second) arrest of the Defendant (June 30, 2020) for violation of FPO and stalking, I filed for a second FPO against him in September 2020 (Case No. D-043-FM-20-812373). However, I have continued to bear the torment and suffering the Defendant has determinedly caused. Even amidst his confinement at the St. Mary's County Detention Center and admittance at Transformations Mending Fences LLC, The Defendant's progressive manic state and inability to obey judicial order has resulted in additional violations of FPO and continual harassment. I have since received several hand-written letters sent to my residence as well as (threatening) text messages and phone calls from the Defendant and his jail mates.

I am mentally and physically exhausted from the Defendant's cunning schemes, which have ultimately perpetuated his dominance over my life for the past three years (July 2019 – present). Every violation he has committed following his arrests (August 2019 & June 2020) and two issuances of FPO (August 2019 & September 2020), has resulted in my dedicated attendance and participation, defending myself throughout countless hearings, mainly caused by delays on the Defendant's behalf. Meanwhile, I am certain that the Defendant held fixed intentions in order to maintain contact and intimidate me through my attendance at these court proceedings.

As you could imagine, the past two years of my life, spent falling victim to the Defendant's manipulative and callous treatment has made me question my perceptions of human nature. However, I refuse to live in a cynical world where there is no honor, respect, or compassion for others and myself. This was not the foundation, in which I was raised, nor is it the legacy in which I intend to carry on for my late sister, Lauren.

Therefore, I write this letter to the House Judiciary Committee, to proclaim my support of improving Maryland legislation regarding domestic abuse/ stalking crimes through passing House Bill 148 and House Bill 110. Not only will the passing of these bills encourage potential victims to take legal action in the foregoing of similar matters than that of my own, but may also prevent more violent outcomes that are likely to manifest from this highly problematic behavior and sense of entitlement, offenders develop from accessing electronic devices/ applications. Moreover, from maintaining unsolicited contact with victims and illegally monitoring their locations. The circumstances I have endured with the Defendant; the repeated violations and prior convictions of stalking and domestic abuse crimes, confirms that Maryland must improve its legislation, taking into account the advancements in communication technology. Otherwise, offenders will continue to manipulate the judicial system and fulfill their selfish needs, as they are superior to the boundaries, welfare, and respect for others, as well as the law.

Thank you,

Sarah Pitt
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