



Bill No: HB148
Title: Criminal Law – Stalking – Definition
Committee: Judiciary
Hearing: January 27, 2022
Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women’s groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW’s purpose is to advocate for legislation affecting women and families. To accomplish this goal, MLAW creates an annual legislative agenda with issues voted on by MLAW members and endorsed by organizations and individuals from all over Maryland. **HB148 Criminal Law – Stalking – Definition** is a priority on the 2022 MLAW Agenda and we urge your support.

The original stalking statute was passed at a time before the existence of electronic methods of communication and tracking a person. As such, the stalking statute in its current form only addresses physical forms of following a victim. Nowadays, most stalking is committed using electronic means of communication or tracking, instead of physically pursuing a victim. Common examples of stalking using electronic means include, but are by no means limited to: hiding a GPS tracker in a victim’s car; turning on the victim’s phone location application and using it to track the victim’s whereabouts; putting a camera or listening device in a child’s toy in order to hear/watch what happens at the victim’s home; and, installing spyware on a victim’s computer.

Victims who are subjected to these forms of electronic stalking live in almost-constant fear. They never know when, where or how an abuser might conceal a tracking or listening device and use it to follow, track or spy on their daily activities. Victims who move to a secure location for safety purposes or who change their routines in order to avoid their abusers are left to wonder if their new location is truly safe or if their abusers will find out by using a variety of technologies to locate them.

Under the proposed change in the law, such actions could be considered stalking if the victim can prove that the perpetrator intended to cause or knew or reasonable should have known that the conduct would cause serious emotional distress. This would bring the law in line with the forms of stalking that are mostly widely used today.

For these reasons, MLAW strongly urges the passage of HB148.



MLAW 2022 Supporting Organizations

The following organizations have signed on in support of our 2022 Legislative Agenda:

Allegany County Women's Action Coalition
American Association of University Women Maryland
American Association of University Women Anne Arundel County
American Association of University Women Garrett Branch
Anne Arundel County NOW
Baltimore County Commission for Women
Baltimore Jewish Council
Baltimore NOW (National Organization for Women)
Business and Professional Women of Maryland
For All Seasons, Inc.
Forward Justice Maryland
Make A Difference Monday
Maryland Business & Professional Women
Maryland National Organization for Women
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
MD Women's Heritage Center (MWHC)
MoCoWoMen
Montgomery County Commission for Women
Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club
Montgomery County Chapter, National Organization for Women
National Coalition For Sexual Freedom
National Organization for Women
NCBW Anne Arundel County Chapter
Prince George's County Alumnae Chapter
Reproductive Justice Inside
South Prince George's Business and Professional Women
Women's Equality Day Celebration Across Maryland
Women's Law Center of Maryland
Yellow Rose Foundation
Zonta Club Mid Maryland