



## COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

January 24, 2022

The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Esq.  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
Taylor House Office Building, Room 101  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter in Support of SB0328 – Criminal Law – Stalking - Definition

Dear Chairperson Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Montgomery County Commission for Women (“Commission”), I write to express our strong support of SB0328 – Criminal Law – Stalking - Definition (cross-filed with HB0148) and to urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on this bill. It is essential to expand the statutory definition of stalking to include stalking through electronic communication and tracking devices.

In 2018, a new academic study found that more than 200 apps and services offer would-be stalkers a variety of capabilities, from basic location tracking to harvesting texts and even secretly recording videos (Valentino-DeVries, 2018). Roughly four-in-ten Americans have experienced online harassment or stalking (Pew Research Center, 2021), which is on the rise. There is a strong connection between stalking and intimate partner violence. Stalking is no longer just hiding around the corner or in the bushes. It has extended to GPS technology, computer spyware, and other forms.

Even though stalking has serious consequences and is increasingly prevalent, the existing stalking statute does not outlaw the use of technology as a form of stalking, leaving its victims vulnerable and unprotected. The current stalking statute *must* be updated to include stalking by electronic technology in any form.

My personal experience with stalking stems from a former customer searching the internet to locate me and begin harassing me via mail. I filed a protective order against the individual, but the feeling that an individual was doing whatever they could to find me was very uncomfortable. So, I understand what it feels like to be fearful of someone monitoring your whereabouts and doing whatever is needed to locate someone. Abusers and stalkers go through great lengths to maintain power and control over their victims. We must do more to protect victims from this terrible crime.

The Montgomery County Commission for women fully supports expanding the current stalking bill to include stalking through electronic and tracking devices.

Sincerely,



Donna Rojas  
Chair  
Montgomery County Commission for Women

Commissioners:

Patricia Maclay – First Vice President  
Tonia Bui – Second Vice President  
Isabel Argoti – Recording Secretary  
Isabel Argoti  
Arlinda Clark  
Nicole Y. Drew  
Ijeoma Enendu  
Janet LaVelle  
Jan Molino  
Betty Romero  
Chai Shenoy  
Angela Whitehead Quigley

Executive Director  
Jodi Finkelstein