



To: Judiciary Committee

From: Rebecca Snyder, Executive Director, Executive Alliance

Date: January 27, 2022

RE: HB 148 - FAVORABLE

Executive Alliance focuses on creating opportunities for professional women in Maryland's boardrooms and executive leadership levels through education, advocacy and mentorship.

We are pleased to support HB 148, which would broaden the definition of stalking to include electronic communication and the use of tracking devices or apps. Stalking inordinately affects women and has a significant economic cost. One in six women are stalked at some point in their lifetime<sup>i</sup>. Stalking victims often experience work performance issues, including inability to concentrate, fear of leaving their house, time lost to stalking (phone calls, attending to legal matters and so on), and tension in the workplace if the victim is seen as somehow encouraging or over-reacting to the stalking<sup>ii</sup>. Analysis of the Supplemental Victimization Survey (conducted in 2006) "found that 40% of stalking victims lost five or more days of work and 14.5% lost more than 25 days of work."<sup>iii</sup> The long term effects of stalking are significant and many victims are forced to change their jobs or even careers because of the stalking.<sup>iv</sup>

A study in the American Journal of Preventative Medicine calculates that on average, a victim of intimate partner violence and stalking will lose \$730 in productivity each year.<sup>v</sup> Nearly half of Maryland's workforce is female, estimated at 1,041,872 women<sup>vi</sup>. Extrapolating those statistics means that over 173,000 women in Maryland will be stalked during their working lifetime, at a cost of nearly \$128 million. Stalking holds women back, decreasing their ability to maintain employment and promote themselves.

It's not just the economic blow of lost productivity that is affected by stalking – there is a tangible threat of violence. Nationally 44% of stalking incidents result in workplace violence (and in medical facilities, this percentage jumps to 67%).<sup>vii</sup> Maryland workplaces need a broader tool to keep workers safe.

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Electronic stalking, such as tracking locations, emails, social media posts and other forms of electronic communication, tightens the knot around the victim. By broadening the definition of stalking to include electronic communications, women have another important tool to stop their stalker.

Executive Alliance urges a favorable report.

*Executive Alliance is a Maryland 501(c)(3) organization focused on bringing women into the C-Suite and the boardroom. We believe that gender and racial equity is critical to building diverse organizations, and that change starts at the top. Executive Alliance tracks the representation of women (including women of color) at publicly-traded companies headquartered in Maryland. Representation of women and people of color lag behind national averages. Maryland can and should do better. In Executive Alliance's latest annual Census Report (see the report, released in June at <https://executivealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/EA-Honor-Roll-publication-2021-final-for-web.pdf>), we reported that women hold 22% of Maryland public company board seats, in contrast with 28% women in the S&P 500. The news is even worse for women of color. In Maryland, women of color hold 3.4% of public company board seats. In the Fortune 500, women of color hold 4.6% of board seats. Maryland still has seven publicly-traded companies with NO women directors.*

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<sup>i</sup> Breiding et al, 2014. Prevalence and Characteristics of Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization – National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6308.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Stalking Risk Profile, <https://www.stalkingriskprofile.com/victim-support/stalking-in-the-workplace>

<sup>iii</sup> "Intersections of Stalking and Economic Security," Institute for Women's Policy Research, January 2017.

<sup>iv</sup> Korkodeilou, Jenny. 2016. "'No Place to Hide' Stalking Victimization and its Psycho-Social Effects." International Review of Victimology, August 2016.

<sup>v</sup> "Short-term Lost Productivity per Victim: Intimate Partner Violence, Sexual Violence, or Stalking, published May 15, 2018. [https://www.ajponline.org/article/S0749-3797\(18\)31634-9/fulltext](https://www.ajponline.org/article/S0749-3797(18)31634-9/fulltext)

<sup>vi</sup> Maryland Women: A Status Report, April 2021, page 11. [https://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/MD-Women-A-Status-Report\\_FIN-2.pdf](https://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/MD-Women-A-Status-Report_FIN-2.pdf)

<sup>vii</sup> Journal of the Kentucky Medical Association, 1997.

<https://archive.org/details/journalofkentuck95unse/page/n193/mode/2up>

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