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TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: SB 148 – Victim Services Programs – Supplementing Federal Funding and Support (Victim Services Stabilization Act): **Support with Amendment**

The Office of the Attorney General (“the OAG”) urges the Budget and Taxation Committee to favorably report Senate Bill 148 after adopting an amendment, which adds the OAG to the list of entities the bill would require the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victims Services to “regularly consult, collaborate with, and consider the recommendations regarding allocation of funding from” (Md. Code, Criminal Procedure § 11-934(d)).

The OAG, similar to local State’s Attorneys’ Offices in Maryland, provides support to victims of crime as they navigate the criminal justice system. Given the breadth of the OAG’s jurisdiction, this work is extensive. It’s primarily performed by the OAG’s Victim Witness Coordinator and is available during all phases of a case—investigation, pre-trial litigation, trial, sentencing, post-conviction, and/or appeal—and in venues throughout the state. Many of the individuals the OAG seeks to support have been victimized by serious criminal offenses under the purview of different OAG units and divisions, such as the Organized Crime Unit, the Criminal Appeals Division, the Independent Investigations Division, and the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit. The OAG provides victim services ranging from statutorily mandated notification to trial preparation and court accompaniment. The OAG also helps crime victims with necessary travel and relocation and strives to connect victims with available government and community-based services.

Because of this work, the OAG requests its inclusion in Section (d) of SB 148 and urges a favorable report with such an amendment.

cc: Committee Members