



CLINICAL LAW PROGRAM

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BILL NO: Senate Bill 27
TITLE: Criminal Procedure—Restorative Justice Program
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
HEARING DATE: February 2, 2023
POSITION: SUPPORT

The Gender Violence Clinic of the University of Maryland Carey School of Law urges a favorable vote on S.B. 27.

Victims of violence are looking for justice alternatives outside of the criminal system. Study after study shows that victims of violence would prefer alternatives to intervention by police, prosecutors, and courts, and that those entities cannot provide the kind of justice that many victims of violence seek. Restorative justice can provide that alternative.

The Gender Violence Clinic represents a variety of survivors of gender-based violence, including criminalized survivors—people who have been incarcerated for crimes related to their own victimization. Many of our clients have been introduced to restorative justice through programs like the Victims’ Voices Building Bridges Program at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women. They have shared their experiences with victims of crime to help those victims experience closure and healing. They have put substantial effort into rehabilitation and are deeply remorseful for their crimes. They would like for the victims of their own crimes to have the same opportunities to experience closure and healing as the people they assist through the Victims’ Voices Building Bridges Program.

The Gender Violence Clinic acknowledges the concerns expressed by others who are testifying about the need to better understand the restorative justice process. But we believe that those concerns can be addressed in the development and implementation of restorative justice projects, and that this bill does not need to be delayed to achieve that goal. We look forward to joining with those organizations to implement the provisions of S.B. 27 in a manner that serves all victims of violence.