



The Honorable Luke Clippinger & Members of the House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building, Room 101
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairperson Clippinger and Judiciary Committee:

The Frederick County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) writes in support of House Bill 324—Child Abuse and Neglect—Domestic Violence. The Frederick County DVCC is a multidisciplinary group of government agencies, criminal and civil justice stakeholders, service providers, and community members, collaborating with the goal of reducing and preventing domestic violence in Frederick County.

Several members of the DVCC work directly with victims of domestic violence, and something we hear repeatedly is that victims are afraid to seek help from law enforcement, the courts, and/or service providers, because they are afraid that their children will be placed in CINA proceedings. Abusers often capitalize on this fear in order to keep the Victim and their children trapped in the cycle of violence.

This legislation would make clear that CINA proceedings are disfavored when they are aimed at curtailing a Victim's rights to their children, based solely on an alleged "failure to protect." If passed, victims will be able to see that Maryland stands with them, and won't punish them for abuse they suffer. This law will help service providers, law enforcement, and those entrusted with the stories of victims, to encourage them to seek assistance in order to find safety for themselves and their children.

We urge a favorable report on HB 324.


Brett Engler

Chairperson