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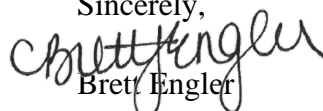
The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Clippinger,

The Frederick County State's Attorney's Office writes in support of HB 411, Criminal Procedure - Violation of Pretrial or Posttrial Condition by Incarcerated Person - Victim Contact. I am the Chief of the Domestic Violence Unit, and in nearly every felony case I prosecute, offenders continue to contact their victim from jail pending trial. Overwhelmingly, the abuser's goal is to maintain power and control over the Victim in order to keep them from cooperating with the prosecution. Sometimes urges to not cooperate are explicit, sometimes they are subtle.

Currently, Criminal Procedure 5-213.1 appears to apply only to those released on bond, not those incarcerated pending trial. However, offenders held pre-trial are often the most violent and dangerous, and the majority will use any means necessary to continue to communicate with their victim, even from a jail cell, fearing little to no repercussion. This legislation will ensure that prosecutors and the Courts can act on this type of conduct, helping the justice system protect victims from communication aimed towards the offender's chief purpose—keeping the victim in the abusive relationship, and/or influencing their conduct while the offender is facing charges.

We urge a favorable report on HB 411.

Sincerely,

Brett Engler

