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HOUSE PARLIAMENTARIAN

Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

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Development

Oversight Committee on Pensions

Joint Committee on Children,
Youth, and Families

House Chair

Baltimore City Delegation



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB0861: Criminal Procedure - Victim Compensation - Alterations

Bill Hearing: March 7th, 2023 at 1:00 p.m., Judiciary Committee

Chairman Luke Clippinger, Vice Chair David Moon, and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Currently, it is incredibly difficult for victims of violent crimes to access the available resources to support them while experiencing such a difficult and volatile time. Further, the available resources do not effectively cover all of the expenses to support victims to leave and heal their dangerous situations. That is why I am sponsoring House Bill 861, which would streamline and expand the abilities of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to better serve Maryland's victims of violent crime.

Specifically, the bill will alter a number of essential aspects of the compensation process for victims of violent crime. Firstly, it will change the composition of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to better represent the communities it is serving. Secondly, it will alter certain duties, powers, and procedures for the Board to make awards to victims of crime. Thirdly, the bill will adjust the amount and types of awards the Board is authorized to make to victims of crime. Finally, it will authorize reconsideration and judicial review of decisions of the Board. All of these changes are vital to better support one of our most vulnerable populations.

When people are victims of violent crime, they often suffer from significant physical and psychological harm or die. Many are not in a position to provide for themselves and may end up reliant on public assistance should the government not provide the swift resources. The assistance in this bill will address the emotional, practical, and financial hurdles that victims face in the immediate aftermath of the crime. These may include the wages lost from missing work, unexpected funeral expenses, and medical and mental health costs, all essential to the recovery process.

It is unacceptable to continue to overlook the need to support victims of violent crime. A disproportionate number of victims are already members of historically underserved communities. We need to do all we can to support these victims, and this bill would be a significant step in the right direction.

I strongly urge a favorable report on House Bill 861.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie M. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Delegate Stephanie M. Smith