

The Bridge

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Marion Gill, Coordinator of Family Violence Programs
Testimony regarding HB 411, Criminal Procedure-Violation of Pretrial or Posttrial Condition by
Incarcerated Person-Victim Contact
Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services
February 21st, 2023

The Bridge is the comprehensive program serving victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking in Cecil County. Services offered through The Bridge include counseling, court advocacy, hospital accompaniment and safe shelter accommodations. During calendar year 2022, nearly 220 survivors were assisted to include adults and children and 745 hotline calls were answered.

As a program that provides services to victims of violence there are often times we are faced with challenging scenarios to assist in protection of victims of intimate partner violence. Recently we were faced with a challenge when an inmate contacted their victim, who had an active protective order, through a third party while incarcerated. This contact proved to be detrimental to the success of the victim's progress in the journey forward towards safety and security from her abuser. While we will continue to face difficult scenarios in assisting with victim safety we urge the State of Maryland to assist in protecting victims of intimate partner violence with the passage of the Violation of Pretrial or Posttrial Condition by Incarcerated Person-Victim Contact Bill would provide an additional means to ensure that victims of intimate partner violence are protected from contact with their abuser while the abuser is incarcerated.

The demand for protection for victims at each stage of a protective order is essential. It is imperative that the State of Maryland provide the support and assistance that the survivors need and deserve.