

SB0439_Victims_of_Domestic_Violence_Program_Certif

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Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0439
Family Law - Victims of Domestic Violence Program
Certification and Grant Fund

Bill Sponsor: Senators Elfreth, Hettleman, Kelly, and Salling

Committee: Judicial Proceedings and Budget and Taxation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0439 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

MLC backs strengthening the Maryland Domestic Violence Program. This bill would provide for consistent and non-lapsing grants totaling \$5 million annually for more certified shelters and support services for victims of domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a grave issue that can have devastating consequences for victims, their families, and communities. Victims suffer physical and emotional harm. Even if children themselves are not abused, witnessing domestic violence can be harmful. In addition, communities suffer from lost work productivity due to absenteeism caused by domestic violence.

Maryland needs to do more to support victims of domestic violence through consistent and approved programs that remove people from these harmful situations.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB 439- Victims of Domestic Violence Program- LOS.

Uploaded by: Jane Krienke

Position: FAV



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 15, 2024

To: The Honorable William C. Smith Jr., Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 439- Family Law- Victims of Domestic Violence Program- Certification and Grant Fund

Dear Chair Smith:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 439.

Across the state, hospital-based sexual assault forensic exam ([SAFE](#)) programs employ forensic nurse examiners. These registered nurses receive special training in evidence collection and are experts in delivering trauma-informed care to survivors of violence and abuse. State law ensures survivors of sexual assault have access to emergency medical treatment for their injuries with no out-of-pocket expense. Hospitals care for survivors of all forms of violence. One critical component of this care is safety planning and ensuring a safe discharge plan.

According to the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, there are 19 comprehensive domestic violence programs in Maryland. These programs provide a critical safety net for survivors by offering 24-hour assistance, emergency shelter, counseling, and referrals to additional community resources. These are important wraparound services that benefit survivors long term.

Ensuring a strong safety net for survivors is essential to promote their health and well-being.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on SB 439.

For more information, please contact:

Jane Krienke, Senior Legislative Analyst, Government Affairs
Jkrienke@mhaonline.org

MNADV certification & fund - testimony - senate -

Uploaded by: Lisae C Jordan

Position: FAV



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

P.O. Box 8782
Silver Spring, MD 20907
Phone: 301-565-2277
Fax: 301-565-3619

For more information contact:
Lisae C. Jordan, Esquire
443-995-5544
www.mcasa.org

Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 439
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
February 15, 2024

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is a non-profit membership organization that includes the State's seventeen rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI), a statewide legal services provider for survivors of sexual assault. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all of its members working to eliminate sexual violence. We urge the Judicial Proceedings and Budget and Taxation Committees to report favorably on Senate Bill 439.

Senate Bill 439 – Certification of Intimate Partner Violence Programs and Establishment of a Victims of Domestic Violence Grant Fund

This bill would give the federally recognized state domestic violence coalition (the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence) formal responsibility for certifying comprehensive domestic violence programs, create a grant fund to segregate and protect funds to support these programs, and allow the Governor to allocate \$5 million to the Fund.

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is the federally recognized sexual assault coalition and has responsibility to certify the comprehensive rape crisis centers across the state. Criminal Procedure § 11-923. As a result of their certification, these rape crisis centers are eligible for funding to support their important work helping sexual assault survivors in their communities. Certification is a common responsibility for state sexual assault coalitions across the United States and it works well. Coalitions share research, help develop statewide policy, and provide programs with a forum to learn from one another. Like other professions, such as lawyers and social workers, the coalition works with providers to develop standards to ensure high quality services for their clients. Senate Bill 439 would create parallel responsibilities for the federally recognized state domestic violence coalition.

Senate Bill 439 also establishes a Victims of Domestic Violence Grant Fund and provides that the Governor may include an annual appropriation of \$5 million. MCASA appreciates the difficult budget year and looks forward to helping our sister coalition advocate for mandatory funding in the future.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judicial Proceedings and Budget and Taxation Committees to
report favorably on Senate Bill 439**

SB 439_Comprehensive Programs_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Melanie Shapiro

Position: FAV



BILL NO: Senate Bill 439
TITLE: Family Law - Victims of Domestic Violence Program - Certification and Grant Fund
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
HEARING DATE: February 15, 2024
POSITION: FAVORABLE

Senate Bill 439 clarifies in statute that there is a Domestic Violence Grant Fund and enables the Governor to include \$5 million as an annual appropriation to the fund. In addition, SB 439 would require the federally recognized state domestic violence coalition to certify programs as comprehensive domestic violence programs.

In 2022, comprehensive domestic violence programs served over 23,000 victims of domestic violence in the State of Maryland¹. Pursuant to [Maryland state law](#) and clarified in [COMAR](#), each county and Baltimore City shall be served by at least one comprehensive domestic violence program. There are numerous service providers in Maryland that provide critical services for victims and survivors of domestic violence and their families, however not all programs meet the statutory and regulatory definition of a comprehensive program. It is imperative that there is a local recognized provider to be a point of contact for community allies including courts, law enforcement, and other social services agencies. Currently, there are 19 comprehensive domestic violence programs that provide statutorily required services across the State of Maryland.

¹ <https://goccp.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/FL-%C2%A7-4-516a-GOCYPVS-Domestic-Violence-Program-FY-2022-Annual-Report-MSAR-8611.pdf>

To qualify as a comprehensive domestic violence program a service provider must provide a 24-hour hotline, emergency shelter services for a victim of domestic violence and their children, counseling services for a victim of domestic violence, counseling services for an abuser, and additional referrals to other community resources if needed. Only if a program offers each of the enumerated services can they qualify as a comprehensive program.

Currently, comprehensive domestic violence programs are uniquely eligible for specific funding sources including the Maryland Domestic Violence Program (hereinafter “DOMV”). Slightly over \$2 million is allocated annually to this fund which is awarded by the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention and Policy. The amount of state dollars allocated to this fund has not changed in at least 10 years. The lack of increase in state funds creates a tremendous burden on victim service providers.

The comprehensive domestic violence programs participate annually in a one-day snapshot to have a year-to-year comparison of victims’ needs. On [September 7, 2022](#), over 1,000 victims of domestic violence received services from one of the domestic violence programs in our state, a 32% increase from the [2021 snapshot](#). Unfortunately, 334 victims had an unmet need for services, a 74% increase of unmet needs from the prior year, demonstrating the increase in the number of victims seeking services and complexity of victims’ needs. Almost 50% of that need was for housing. Emergency shelter is an extraordinary cost, including the cost to maintain the physical space and staff which are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is a cost that is unique to comprehensive domestic violence programs that are statutorily required to provide emergency housing.

To ensure that resources are directed to the intended service providers and that the necessary and statutorily required services are available in each county and Baltimore City, MNADV, Maryland’s federally recognized state domestic violence coalition, will certify programs as comprehensive domestic violence programs.

As the 19 comprehensive programs in the State of Maryland, who are committed to the victims and survivors of domestic violence in Maryland, **we urge a favorable report on SB 439.**

Submitted By:

Allegany County: Family Crisis Resource Center

Anne Arundel County: YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County

Baltimore City: House of Ruth Maryland

Baltimore County: Family Crisis Center of Baltimore County and TurnAround, Inc.

Calvert County: Calvert Center for Change

Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot Counties: Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence

Carroll County: Springboard Community Services

Cecil County: The Bridge

Charles County: Center for Abused Persons

Frederick County: Heartly House, Inc

Garrett County: The Dove Center
Harford County: Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center (SARC)
Howard County: HopeWorks of Howard County
Montgomery County: Montgomery County Trauma Services
Prince George's County: Community Crisis Services, Inc.
St. Mary's County: Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy
Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester County: Life Crisis Center Inc.
Washington County: CASA, Inc.

SB 439_DVSP_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Melanie Shapiro

Position: FAV

We support the certification of programs as comprehensive domestic violence programs by the federally recognized state domestic violence coalition. It will be beneficial for all community members to know that there is a service provider that can provide emergency housing, where to refer for abuser intervention, and what number to offer for a 24-hour hotline. Strong and stable comprehensive programs benefit the larger service provider community and the victims we all are committed to serve. **We urge a favorable report on SB 439.**

Submitted By:

Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project

CHANA

Domestic Violence (DOVE) Program at Northwest Hospital

Human Trafficking Prevention Project

JCADA

Maryland State Bar Association

Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence

ROAR

Women's Law Center of Maryland

SB 439_MNADV_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Melanie Shapiro

Position: FAV



BILL NO: House Bill 656
TITLE: Family Law - Victims of Domestic Violence Program - Certification and Grant Fund
COMMITTEE: Judiciary
HEARING DATE: February 15, 2024
POSITION: **FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 439.**

In the FY24 budget, only \$2,058,824 of state dollars were allocated for the Maryland Domestic Violence Program (DOMV). Senate Bill 439 would establish the Victims of Domestic Violence Program Grant Fund and states that the Governor *may* include an annual appropriation of \$5 million.

The 19 comprehensive domestic violence programs eligible for this fund provide emergency shelter, 24-hour hotlines, counseling services, safety planning, and are there any time of day or night when a victim is in need.¹ Programs must be sufficiently funded so that no victim has an unmet need, especially one that could be a matter of life or death. An increase in general fund allocations for domestic violence would enable programs to retain qualified staff, to hire additional staff to better meet victims' needs, and to develop new programs. Service providers are reticent to engage in hiring or expansion due to funding needs, yet the needs of victims are greater than ever.

A greater financial commitment to domestic violence programs and services will benefit not only victims of domestic violence but Maryland as a whole. The impact of even a single incident of domestic violence reverberates throughout the state and can have a significant financial impact on the State of Maryland, while the direct impact on the victim and their family is unquantifiable.

¹ Md. Ann. Code, Family Law §4-515,
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebwebsite/Laws/StatuteText?article=gfl§ion=4-515&enactments=false>



There were more than 20,000 domestic violence incidents reported as crimes in FY21 in Maryland.² The actual number of domestic violence incidents is much higher since at least half of all domestic violence occurrences are unreported.

Research has been conducted by other states and counties to determine the financial impact of domestic violence and the numbers are astounding. In Milwaukee County it is estimated that the annual economic loss as the result of domestic violence is \$113.1 million.³ The State of Wisconsin estimates their annual economic loss to be over \$657.8 million.⁴ In South Carolina, in 2020, the economic impact of domestic violence was \$358.4 million.⁵ The lifetime cost of domestic violence is estimated to be \$103,767 for a female victim and \$23,414 for a male victim.⁶ The consequences of domestic violence are widespread and effect children exposed to the violence, worker productivity, the healthcare system, the civil legal system, the criminal legal system, and law enforcement.

It is consistently reported statewide that the complexity and severity of domestic violence has increased. One program director expressed that “the hundreds of people on our waitlist who want to know if there is someone there for them keeps me up at night. Everyone deserves to be safe.” Another program reported that they experienced a 92% increase in domestic violence calls for service in FY22 with a 74% increase in time spent per call. Yet a third program documented a 111% increase in hotline calls since FY20. These numbers are just a small sample that demonstrates the vast increase requiring more funding to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence in Maryland.

A modest investment of \$5 million dollars to serve and benefit victims of domestic violence could potentially save the state millions of dollars by preventing further incidents of domestic violence

² [https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/GOCPYVS/FL4-516\(a\)_2021.pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/GOCPYVS/FL4-516(a)_2021.pdf)

³ <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d39f654dfc553000198b222/t/6345b7f7fc2276703a2bf19d/1665513464758/Economic+Impact+of+DV+FINAL.+10.11.2022.pdf>

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ <https://www.jkffc.org/files/8bfe809e-c9fe-4504-b20f-593f24e17b0d--c5cb8b8c-e286-43b0-bd11-0e52a1dcd552/sc-dv-study.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6161830/>



and save the lives of victims in need. With rising inflation, an unprecedented number of mental health needs, the burdens on those serving victims of domestic violence continues to mount.

The certification of programs as comprehensive programs by MNADV, the federally recognized state domestic violence coalition, would help determine which programs are eligible for the designated funding. MNADV provides training and technical assistance to comprehensive programs and works collaboratively to ensure victims have access to life saving services.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on SB 439.**

Elfreth - SB 439 Testimony.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Elfreth

Position: FAV

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH
Legislative District 30
Anne Arundel County



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 104
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3578 · 301-858-3578
800-492-7122 Ext. 3578
Fax 410-841-3156 · 301-858-3156
Sarah.Elfreth@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Pensions

Chair, Public Safety,
Transportation, and Environment

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area

Chair, Joint Subcommittee on
Program Open Space/Agricultural
Land Preservation

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 15, 2024

Testimony in Favor of SB 439
Family Law - Victims of Domestic Violence Program - Certification and Grant Fund

Chairman Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 439 to ensure consistent State funding to certified domestic violence programs which provide life-saving care to victims and families.

Domestic violence programs save lives. Survivors have access to protection from their abusers through emergency housing and support the rebuilding of victims' lives through counseling, advocacy, and education. Programs in Maryland coordinate safe housing for adults and children escaping domestic violence, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, and hotels. Support services are also provided, including therapy by licensed practitioners, support groups, court accompaniment, legal advocacy, bilingual advocacy, support and advocacy for victims of human trafficking, and financial literacy support. Services and placements are coordinated through domestic violence programs who tailor the support to the unique needs of the victims.¹

In 2021, 762 victims of domestic violence were served in just one day in Maryland. In this year, \$3 million in State funding was allocated to support these programs. However, 191 requests for services went unfulfilled due to a lack of resources, 29% of which were unmet emergency housing needs.²

In 2022, State funding was decreased to only \$1 million, a decrease of 66% from the year prior. The monumental consequence was felt by programs and victims across Maryland, as victims served increased by 32% while unmet requests for services increased by 74%. Programs served 1009 victims in just one day in 2022.³

The conclusion is clear - cutting State funding to domestic violence programs leads to more requests for support going unmet and endangers the lives of victims. Further, the ever fluctuating funding allocation stokes uncertainty

¹ <https://www.mnadv.org/>

² <https://nnedv.org/resources-library/16th-annual-domestic-violence-counts-report-maryland-summary/>

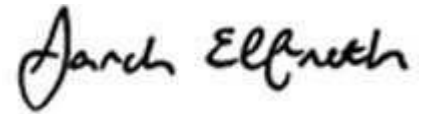
³ <https://nnedv.org/resources-library/17th-annual-domestic-violence-counts-report-maryland-summary/>

among domestic violence programs as the total amount and consequently the grant funding available changes each year. Domestic violence programs need and deserve adequate and reliable funding to complete their mission of protecting and uplifting victims.

Senate Bill 439 establishes a designated Domestic Violence Program Grant Fund to be administered by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCPP). This Fund will be endowed by funding allocated by the Governor up to \$5 million per year as well as any additional funding sources the Executive Director of GOCPP secures for this purpose. Funds will be dispersed through to

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 439.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Elfreth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S" and a prominent "E".

Senator Sarah Elfreth
District 30