



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

DAWN LUEDTKE  
COUNCILMEMBER  
DISTRICT 7

February 8, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 471, *Criminal Procedure - Victim Compensation - Alterations (Victim Compensation Reform Act of 2024)*

Dear Chair Smith,

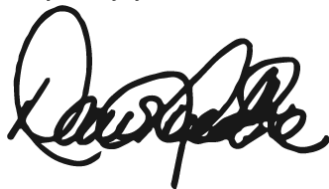
I write in support of Senate Bill 471, Criminal Procedure - Victim Compensation - Alterations (Victim Compensation Reform Act of 2024), as it will ensure survivors of violence have the resources necessary to fully recover and live fulfilling lives.

This legislation increases the amount of compensation available to the victim from \$10,000 to \$45,000 and removes multiple requirements that prevent victims from being eligible for victim compensation. Specifically, it removes the requirement that a victim must report a crime to law enforcement within 48 hours and that a victim must “cooperate” with law enforcement – an arbitrary term based on the outdated notion of a “model victim,” or the idea that some victims are “deserving” and some victims are “undeserving.” There are many reasons why a victim would be hesitant to cooperate with law enforcement, not the least of which is the fear of re-traumatization, and it does not make that victim any less deserving of compensation. I am also pleased to see that the bill expands the definition of injuries to include psychological harm and authorizes emergency awards in extenuating circumstances.

In addition to supporting the victim-focused reforms in the bill, I am enthusiastic about the proposed systemic improvements to the Maryland’s Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. Applying for compensation is administratively challenging at best. Survivors often encounter delays, conflicting requests for documentation, lost applications, and bureaucratic red tape that discourages or deters them entirely. The requirement in Senate Bill 471 that the Board must include members with lived experience, as well as service providers in the field of direct victim assistance, ensures that a victim’s rights and interests are represented. The composition of the board signals Maryland’s commitment to taking a holistic approach to recovery and community repair.

I thank you for the opportunity to voice my support for Senate Bill 471 and I urge this Committee's favorable report.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Luedtke". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops and a prominent initial "D".

Dawn Luedtke  
Montgomery County Councilmember, District 7

cc: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee