



Friday, February 2nd, 2023

RE: Support for House Bill 575: Victim Compensation Reform Act of 2024

Dear Chairman Clippinger,

On behalf of the March For Our Lives, a courageous youth-led movement dedicated to promoting civic engagement, education, and direct action by youth to eliminate the epidemic of gun violence, I write this letter to register our support for HB 575. This measure will create an accessible, non-discriminatory victim compensation process to support all victims of crime or their family members left behind. It will provide prompt and crucial financial support when needed most and remove unnecessary and arbitrary denials of monetary relief for applicants for expenses incurred due to being a victim of crime.

In FY22, more than half of the claims for victim compensation were deemed ineligible or closed without compensation. This situation has resulted in Maryland having one of the country's lowest victim compensation rates. Unfortunately, this has disproportionately affected applicants of color and their families, particularly black men and young people impacted by gun violence, fostering a sense of disconnection and disillusionment.

Working with young people and survivors of gun violence from Maryland and across the country, we have seen the short and long-term impacts that gun violence and other violent events cause. Your committee can help support survivors in Maryland in their time of need by increasing their access to compensation, thus allowing increased access to medical care and mental health services, covering missed wages, burial expenses, and more. The state has a duty to be there in its citizen's time of need; this bill is a significant step in the right direction to show up for them.

We are proud to express support for HB 575 and urge the passage of this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

Madelyn Cobb

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March For Our Lives

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**MARCH
FOR OUR
LIVES** 