

**HB 911**  
**Judiciary Committee**  
**Peace Orders – Visual Surveillance**  
**Margo Lee Williams, M. A.**  
**President, Just Stalking: Maryland Resources**  
**Written Testimony**

Chair Clippinger, and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 911. I am providing this testimony in my capacity as President of the Board of Directors for Just Stalking: Maryland Resources, as well as a parent of a victim of stalking for over 15 years.

Sitting in front of my daughter's house day after day for a month, picking up where he left off from the previous ten years after a brief incarceration, **wasn't a crime** as she'd been told by the police responding to her calls to report Peace Order violations. They "aren't on your property." When they had been on the property, in violation of the **Peace Order**, the police simply asked them to leave, which they did, until the police left, then they were back, sitting in their car at the curb for hours, or ringing the doorbell, pleading for her to open the door. Even though she was too frightened to turn lights on in her house, too frightened to leave the house for any reason, too frightened to stand upright to walk to the bathroom, it was not an emergency the 911 Dispatcher claimed. Even though day after day, she was calling for help and explaining that there is a **Peace Order**. So, I called, "It's not an emergency"... "we don't have anyone available right now... ." "***What has to happen to get help?***" I was screaming. ***What was the point of the Peace Order if no one would enforce it?*** When residents call **911** to say there is a violation, it is **essential** to respond. Since **Peace Order** recipients are not intimate partners, they are not eligible for Protective Orders, but they are **nonetheless in need of protection.**

**Visual Surveillance** that extends beyond a two-week threshold can legitimately be called **stalking** and can have the potential of **persisting** for decades. Stalkers who stalk for two weeks/14 days or more are 32% more likely to stalk for six to twelve months with an average of 20 intrusions (McEwan, et al., 2017). Even when stalking *appears to cease* for six months or longer, they are **38% more likely to begin stalking again**. This **recurrence** can also span decades (McEwan, et al., 2017).

Stalkers intentionally or unintentionally damage the lives of **primary and secondary victims** affecting employment, causing marital strains, and emotional damage to children. Secondary victims have been found to be 3% of the overall victim community. My daughter and I worried and were anxious about my coming and going to her house. Since I had been named in a previous Peace Order we did not know if he saw me as some sort of threat or barrier, so I stayed away more than we would have liked, leaving her on many occasions with no onsite emotional support. She was concerned about her neighbors as well, and feared for the children walking to and from the neighborhood school at the end of her street, since ***we had no idea***

***whether or not he had a firearm at that time, but was later arrested with a firearm claiming to be trying to get to my daughter's house.***

For these reasons, as President of Just Stalking: Maryland Resources, I respectfully request the Committee to return a favorable reading on HB 911.

#### Reference

McEwan, T. E., Daffern, M., MacKenzie, R. D., & Ogloff, J. R. P. (2017). Risk factors for stalking violence, persistence, and recurrence, *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 28(1), 38-56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14789949.2016.1247188>