

January 29, 2025

**Senate Bill 311**

**Government Officials' Family Protection Act of 2025**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 311 - Government Officials' Family Protection Act of 2025. This Bill adds immediate family members of government officials to the list of government officials to which the current criminal prohibition on threats applies. These include a State or local official, a deputy State's Attorney, an assistant State's Attorney, or an assistant Public Defender.

Threats against local officials across the country have been on the rise for several years. A 2024 report from the Brennan Center for Justice found that threats, harassment, and intimidation against state and local officials, as well as their families, have increased across demographics and political ideologies.<sup>1</sup> These threats constrain constituent engagement, limit the policy positions local officials may feel safe to support, and make them less willing to continue in public service. In fact, over 40 percent of local officeholders said they were less willing to run for reelection or higher office at the time they were surveyed because of abuse and fifty-three percent of state legislators believed that abuse had deterred their colleagues from taking on controversial topics.<sup>2</sup> Threats against government officials' families impinge on the public discourse and debate that is vital to a functioning democracy, which is why federal law has criminalized threats against federal officials and their family members since 1984. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 115.

Accordingly, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 311.

---

<sup>1</sup> Gowri Ramachandran, et al, "Intimidation of State and Local Officeholders" The Brennan Center for Justice, 2024. Available at: <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/intimidation-state-and-local-officeholders>

<sup>2</sup> Id.