



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony SB 650 - *Domestic Violence Offender Registry*

Good afternoon, Chairman Smith, Vice Chair and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. SB 650 will create a Domestic Violence Offender Registry in Maryland. The registry will track individuals convicted of domestic violence-related crimes. This includes those convicted of crimes like assault, threats, or any violence occurring in intimate relationships.

Key Provisions:

- Individuals convicted of three or more domestic violence-related crimes will have to register with the local sheriff's office when they are released, granted probation, or given a sentence that does not involve jail time.
- The registry will include the offender's name, address, crime details, and a photo.
- The registry will be available to the public via the internet, phone, mail, and in person.
- Offenders will remain on the registry for 15 years after their latest conviction or release, with the possibility of extensions if they commit additional crimes.
- Offenders can petition the court to be removed from the registry after proving they no longer pose a threat to others.

SB 650 is important to our community because as the legislature we have a duty to protect victims of domestic violence, which is an ongoing crisis and in fact increasing. Data shows that domestic violence has **increased** statewide and in Prince George's County, Maryland.

In 2021, Maryland saw over 58,000 domestic violence incidents reported from physical harm to emotional and psychological abuse. Hence, the rising trend of domestic violence in Maryland highlights the **urgent need for a registry**, which will address the issue of repeat offenders and provide tools to keep communities safer. In addition, in 2024, Prince George's County saw a **13% increase in domestic violence cases**, showing the growing demand for stronger preventive measures.

Also, I have amended SB 650 to make the registry prospective. By applying the law prospectively, we will create a forward-looking strategy to address this issue.

In closing, this registry will help **protect victims** by providing a clear record of **repeat offenders**, making it easier to identify risks to public safety. SB 650 represents a proactive approach to combating domestic violence in Maryland. By creating a domestic violence offender registry, the state is taking a major step toward **protecting victims**, preventing future crimes, and raising awareness about the growing issue. With domestic violence cases increasing both in Maryland and specifically in Prince George's County, the implementation of this registry is critical. Therefore, I respectfully urge this committee to give a FAVORABLE report as amended.

Note: According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), approximately 1 in 4 women in Maryland will experience domestic violence in their lifetime.

<https://www.dcnewsnow.com/news/local-news/maryland/prince-georges-county/domestic-violence-cases-on-rise-in-prince-georges-county-prompting-panel-discussion>