



**COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CLUSTER**

February 19, 2025
Senator William C. Smith
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 943 Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chairperson Smith, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

On behalf of the Montgomery County Commission for Women, I am writing to ask for your support of SB 943 — Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act. In 2023, 38 women were murdered with a firearm by their partners within the state of Maryland¹. This statistic aligns with national data that indicates one in three women experience intimate partner violence within their lifetime, with 4.5 million women reporting they have been threatened by their partner with a gun^{2,3}. The presence of a firearm in an intimate partner violence case increases the risk that the woman will be killed by five times⁴. Given the risks posed by firearms in intimate partner violence situations, it is imperative that the state has a clear process for the relinquishment of the firearm and strong mechanism for enforcement. This bill closes gaps in the current protective order law by ensuring firearms are relinquished or removed from perpetrators.

Montgomery County Commission for Women advocates for legislation that promotes the equal and full participation of women and girls in every aspect of community living and access to education, healthcare, and work advancement with political and economic power. Women are disproportionately victimized by intimate partner violence, and cannot achieve their full potential when their physical safety is threatened by their current or former partner.

¹ Herren, K. (2024, November 23). Stop silencing survivors [conference presentation]. Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women. Columbia, MD, United States. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-merged-proposal-packet-for-web.pdf](https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-merged-proposal-packet-for-web.pdf)

² Herren, K. (2024, November 23). Stop silencing survivors [conference presentation]. Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women. Columbia, MD, United States. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-merged-proposal-packet-for-web.pdf](https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-merged-proposal-packet-for-web.pdf)

³ Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW). (2024, November 23). MLAW fall agenda conference. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-merged-proposal-packet-for-web.pdf](https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-merged-proposal-packet-for-web.pdf)

⁴ Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW). (2024, November 23). MLAW fall agenda conference. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-merged-proposal-packet-for-web.pdf](https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-merged-proposal-packet-for-web.pdf)

Therefore, I urge a favorable report on SB 943 on behalf of the Montgomery County Commission for Women.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Elizabeth Richards
Chair, Policy & Legislative Committee
Montgomery County Commission for Women