

**January 27, 2025**

**Testimony on SB 311  
Government Officials' Family Protection Act of 2025  
Judicial Proceedings**

**Position:** Favorable

Common Cause is in support of SB 311, which would prohibit threats against the immediate family members of certain government officials and employees. The security of Maryland's elected leaders is essential to maintaining peace, order, and trust within the state.

Local elected officials across the United States faced escalating insults and harassment in the lead-up to the 2024 general election – a recent survey from Princeton University found that 53% of local elected officials reported receiving insults, and 39% reported dealing with some form of harassment between July and October, representing a significant increase from the previous quarter.<sup>1</sup> These numbers point to a growing climate of political hostility and make it easy to understand why would have lawmakers have concerns about the security of their immediate families.

SB 311 addresses this issue by establishing a misdemeanor that will function as a deterrent to prevent future extremists from targeting the immediate family members of our state and local elected officials. Last session, the Legislature took similar steps to offer increased protection to our elections officials, who had been experiencing a similar increase in threats and harassment as we approached the general election date.

Considering the charged political climate across the country, it is critical that the Maryland General Assembly work together to send a strong message to would-be-offenders. No public servant or their family should be endangered simply for doing their job. Ensuring the safety and security of our elected officials' immediate families will help ensure that the Maryland legislative process remains safe, secure, and accessible to all Marylanders.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 311.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/dec/04/local-officials-hostility-election>