

**Krystal Hamlet
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Monday, February 3, 2025

**Maryland Senate
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

RE: Senate Bill 567-Criminal Procedure-District Commissioners And False Statements

Good Afternoon Distinguished Members Of The Senate -

My name is Krystal Hamlet and I am in full support of Senate Bill 567. Towards the end of 2024, I decided to end a toxic 8-year relationship with my son's father. Prior to ending the relationship, I had informed my ex, that I thought it would be best that we go our separate ways and just focus on being amazing co-parents. That's when the nightmare began.

On November 12, 2024-After becoming confrontational with me, in front of our son, he left our apartment (unbeknownst to me) and filed a Protective Order. On November 13, 2024-While I was working at home with our son, I was served the Protective Order by a Howard County Sheriff. The Protective Order included a false statement of Domestic Violence and other absurd untruths. Per the Protective Order, I was not allowed to talk to/harass and/or threaten HIM in any way. Let me not forget to mention-in 2023-my ex did the same thing. He filed a Protective Order against me based on a false statement. This in return, resulted in my son and I having to be temporarily displaced from the household and staying with my father, while my ex continued to stay in the apartment. An apartment where I was the only leaseholder and paid the rent. The impact of false statements can change your life in a matter of moments. Reminded by what I had to go through in 2023-and out of concern for my son and myself-I filed a Protective Order the same day. My Protective Order carried the same weight as his but I made it clear in my Protective Order that my ex needed to vacate the household immediately upon being served. He was officially served on November 17, 2024.

One morning while I was preparing for work at my father's house, I received a call from a Howard County Detective stating that I needed to turn myself in because there was a warrant out for my arrest. I remember saying: "ME? A warrant? Are you sure you have the right person?" The Detective then went on to tell me that my ex had went back to the Commissioner's Office on November 14, 2024 (the day after I filed my Protective Order)-and pressed charges against me for 1st and 2nd Degree Child Abuse. The shock. The agony. The upset. The anger!

How could someone stoop so low and nonetheless lie as a means to gain control over me through litigation abuse and false accusations? False accusations, especially something as serious as Child Abuse, can be incredibly damaging and stressful as you work towards dispelling the lies and restoring the truth.

My ex went back to the Commissioner's Office and filed fraudulent charges against me for Child Abuse out of retaliation towards me wanting to end the toxic relationship, filing for custody and a Protective Order against him. I later found out-he had been tracking my location via an iPhone Air Tag that he had placed in my car without my knowledge or consent. This is how he knew I was at the Commissioner's Office on November 13, 2024.

The law states that every person accused of a crime is presumed innocent unless and until his or her guilt is established beyond reasonable doubt. Yet, I was still treated like a criminal. Handcuffed and taken into custody. Fingerprinted and photos taken. The side eyes, rude comments and lack of support were unreal and very hurtful. I was innocent. There were no reports from CPS or any substantial evidence when it came to his allegations. Just his word over mine. I felt like I was being punished for trying to safely walk away from an abusive partner. The law didn't protect me, it applauded him. It's not fair that someone knows that they can walk into their local Commissioner's Office, falsify information via their written statement, swear by it, have their paperwork stamped and processed to move forward with a warrant for an arrest. Just being able to go by someone's word is **NOT** enough. Warrants should not be issued arbitrarily. Had the Commissioner been able to research the person in front of him/her-they would have found that my ex was infamous for abusing the legal system when it came to Protective Orders and Domestic Violence allegations against his exes.

I wholeheartedly stand behind Senate Bill 567 because it truly stands for and behind individuals like me who have been victims of false accusations and criminal procedure. Victims suffer emotionally, socially, and financially. I am still dealing with the reality of what my ex did to me. I live in fear that he will do it again without any remorse or repercussions. I also have anxiety and fear that the police will come knocking on my door or having to receive another call from a Detective about a warrant being issued for my arrest.

By passing this bill, it will address issues such as mine by providing stronger penalties of false accusations, better safeguards in investigations and most importantly, protection for the accused. False accusations within the Criminal Justice system not only destroy lives and tarnish reputations, but they also expose a deeply flawed system where the innocent suffer, justice is perverted and the true pursuit of fairness is undermined.

Thank you for sharing my story.

Respectfully,

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