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WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 12, 2025

To: Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee

On behalf of the Maryland Women's Caucus, we are pleased to express our strong support for **SB943: Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act.** This critical bill takes a necessary and lifesaving step to protect Maryland women from the lethal threat of firearms in domestic violence situations.

Domestic violence remains a crisis in our state, disproportionately affecting women. According to Everytown Research & Policy, 76% of intimate partner firearm homicide victims are women, and the presence of a firearm increases the likelihood of an abuser killing their female partner by five times. These staggering statistics underscore the urgent need for policies that prioritize the safety of survivors.

SB943 ensures that when a protective order—whether interim, temporary, or final—is issued, firearms and handgun qualification licenses are promptly surrendered. This policy directly addresses a dangerous gap in our legal system by preventing abusers from having access to deadly weapons at the most critical moments. By requiring courts to provide clear instructions on the surrender process and how firearms may be retrieved when appropriate, SB943 strengthens enforcement and ensures consistency across the state.

The reality is that too many Maryland women live in fear, trapped in abusive situations where the presence of a firearm dramatically increases the risk of deadly violence. Ensuring the timely removal of firearms from abusers is not just sound policy—it is a moral imperative. By passing SB943, Maryland will take decisive action to protect survivors, prevent intimate partner homicides, and create a safer future for women and families across the state.

For these reasons, the Maryland Women's Caucus strongly urges the Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report for SB943. Thank you for your time and commitment to making Maryland a leader in protecting survivors of domestic violence.