



BILL NO: Senate Bill 873
TITLE: Criminal Law - Assault in the Third Degree
COMMITTEE: Judiciary
HEARING DATE: March 25, 2025
POSITION: **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the COMMITTEE to report favorably with on SB 873 with amendments.**

Senate Bill 873 as amended in the Senate would create a workgroup to study adoption of a statute creating the crime of third-degree assault. We appreciate the amendment to create a workgroup to study this issue. Because of important nuance, such as the definition of “offensive contact” in the original bill, a more in depth look at the possible creation of this crime should occur. Offensive contact such as that contemplated in the original bill language can include serious and frightening behavior by people engaged in intimate partner violence, sexual harassment or other dominating behavior. It could include things like:

- placing hands around another person’s neck and pushing them up against the wall without causing physical harm;
- dragging a person around the floor without causing harm;
- hitting and pushing while screaming “I’m going to hurt you.”

The above scenarios are acts victims of domestic violence and sexual assault frequently must endure.

We believe it is vitally important to amend one part of the list of members identified in the bill, and to add additional members into the members outlined in the bill. MNADV is the statewide coalition representing domestic violence victim service providers statewide. Thus, we have a broad view of how this would affect criminal charges statewide. Similarly, the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault also represents sexual assault victim service providers across the whole state.

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Thus, we suggest the following amendment:

Page 10. Line 15 – delete “;and”

Page 10, Line 16-17 – following (9) delete entirely, and amend to read “THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MARYLAND NETWORK AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE; AND”

(10) “THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MARYLAND COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT OR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S DESIGNEE.”

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence** urges a **favorable report on SB 873 with the above amendments.**