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TESTIMONY ON HB#0847 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Criminal Procedure - Domestic Violence Offender Registry

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee
FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony supporting HB#/0847, Criminal Procedure - Domestic Violence Offender Registry

The New York Times reported: ¹

Every 16 hours, a woman in the United States is [fatally shot](#) by a current or former partner. [Intimate partner homicide](#) is one of the [leading causes](#) of death for women in the country, with nearly half of all murdered women killed by a partner.

But there are steps that can be taken to prevent more murders. Repeat offenders are [less likely](#) to kill if they are regularly monitored by law enforcement. In order to closely monitor offenders, all states should create comprehensive batterer databases to track domestic abusers who repeatedly violate restraining orders. Currently, states [vary significantly](#) in [how they handle repeat violations](#). The [failure of law enforcement](#) and district attorney offices to communicate has cost victims [their lives](#).

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence statistics on the problem in Maryland: ²

- **1,135 Victims Served 555 adult and child victims of domestic violence** found refuge in emergency shelters, transitional housing, hotels, motels, or other housing provided by local programs. 580 adult and child victims received nonresidential supportive services related to transportation, housing advocacy, legal support, therapy, and more.

We track sex offenders in Maryland – but we fail to track domestic violence offenders so that we can reduce these statistics and the risk of injury or death to the victims of that violence.

We can make progress on this problem by passing this bill that will require the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to establish and maintain the Domestic Violence Offender Registry.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/30/opinion/domestic-violence-ankle-bracelet.html>

² <https://www.mnadv.org/resources/maryland-dv-statistics/>

To permit law enforcement to monitor these offenders, the bill will require a certain person convicted three or more times of a certain domestically related crime to register with a certain county sheriff before the person is released, granted probation, granted a suspended sentence, or is not sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

It will obligate the county sheriff to forward all registration information to the Department for maintenance of the Domestic Violence Offender Registry. It has the potential to make a difference in people's lives affected by intimate partner violence.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an favorable report on HB0847.