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February 20, 2025

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger  
Chair, Judiciary Committee

FROM: Adam Spangler  
Legislative Aide, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 847 - Criminal Procedure - Domestic Violence Offender Registry  
- **Support in Concept**

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The Office of Attorney General (OAG) supports the intent of **House Bill 847** - Criminal Procedure - Domestic Violence Offender Registry. This bill aims to establish the Domestic Violence Offender Registry and introduces vital changes to the existing laws surrounding domestic violence in Maryland, ultimately enhancing community safety and accountability for offenders.

One of the most significant changes to existing law surrounding domestic violence made in **House Bill 847** involves the requirement for individuals convicted three or more times of domestically-related crimes to register with the county sheriff's office. Currently, Maryland does not have a centralized system to monitor repeat domestic violence offenders, which can leave communities vulnerable. This bill seeks to fill that gap by ensuring that these offenders are tracked and that their information is accessible to law enforcement and the public.

**House Bill 847** defines "domestically related crimes" as encompassing not only crimes of domestic violence but also other offenses against individuals with whom the offender has had a sexual relationship within the past 12 months preceding the commission of a crime. This broadened definition increases the scope of protection for potential victims.

Importantly, the establishment of a central computerized Domestic Violence Offender Registry will provide law enforcement with essential tools to monitor offenders. This registry will include comprehensive information such as names, addresses, details of registered crimes, and digital images. This level of detail is crucial for law enforcement agencies aiming to prevent further offenses and protect individuals from potential harm.

Moreover, the bill outlines specific procedures for offenders to update their registration information, requiring them to report any address changes within 10 days and confirm their registration annually. This ongoing requirement ensures that the information remains current, which is fundamental for effective monitoring.

However, it is important to highlight a potential fiscal impact associated with implementing this registry. The costs related to developing, maintaining, and ensuring the security of the centralized database may be significant. Additionally, the requirement for law enforcement agencies to manage ongoing updates and monitoring could necessitate additional funding or personnel training, which would need to be carefully considered in the current legislative budgeting process.

By implementing these changes, **House Bill 847** aims to protect victims while encouraging accountability among repeat offenders. **House Bill 847** signifies a serious commitment to tackling domestic violence in our communities and ensures law enforcement has the necessary tools to combat this issue. For the foregoing reasons, the OAG supports the spirit of this bill.

cc: The Honorable Delegate Aletheia McCaskill  
Judiciary Committee Members