

## HOUSE BILL 1056-General Provisions-Commemorative Days-Purple Lights Night

### IN SUPPORT

#### To the Government, Labor and Elections Committee Chair and the Delegate Sponsors:

My name is Deborah (Gill) Williams, a lifelong Marylander having lived in three of our counties. I was a victim of domestic violence (in my family line) for most of my life. I have two adult children and a granddaughter. Having seen the world through the lens of dysfunction, I know what we can do with the proper support and acknowledgement of a known problem of large proportions. I've been there and back and it has taken me years to get on my feet and stand up to the abusers in my family and in the broader community. With access to mental health and financial resources I'm one of the "lucky" ones.

I'm a member of the Executive Board of the Women's Democratic Club of Montgomery County and the Board of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation where we support the work of the MCFJC within the Sheriff's Department.

I fully support a state-wide day of recognition, October 1<sup>st</sup>. This is a crucial next step in shining a light, a purple one, on the hidden suffering, shame and abandonment felt by more than half of women, families and even men in our state. Could there be a better example of a way to have a positive impact by educating ourselves about the harm being done to a vulnerable subset of residents, neighbors and friends?

There are many things we can do to address the unacceptable treatment of domestic violence victims; by passing laws and creating a pathway for solution driven, actionable steps. Common sense laws were introduced in the current session although not enough will pass this year. We will keep going.

While we wait for our government to catch its breath, we are healing and helping each other in the name of human rights and the essential core of community, our families. A return to civic responsibility and understanding the cost of non-action by ALL of us is the goal. I believe in this work so much. We deserve more productive lives so we, each and every resident of this state, can ALL get things done.

Enactment of House Bill 1056 is a good start for more hope, more thriving and better groundwork for a vibrant and healthy Maryland economy.

It starts with one day every year, October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Thank you.

Deborah G. Williams, CPA  
Tax, Finance and Money Coaching Professional  
Advocate, Friend and Optimist