



BILL NO: Senate Bill 433
TITLE: **Family Law - Temporary and Final Protective Orders - Duration and Relief**
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
HEARING DATE: February 10, 2026
POSITION: **FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that works to lead diverse community partners toward the common purpose of reducing the occurrence and impact of intimate partner violence. **MNADV urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 433.**

Senate Bill 433 would do two things. First, it would lengthen the time between a temporary order of protection hearing and the final protection order hearing. Second, it would add reimbursement for financial loss, incurred by the petitioner due to the respondent's acts, to the possible relief a court can grant in a final order of protection.

Currently, in Maryland's civil protection order law, if a court grants a temporary order of protection (TPO) it must set the final protection order (FPO) hearing 7 days later. Under SB 433, that time would be set at 14 days. Our colleagues at Maryland Legal Aid compiled a chart that indicates what the other states do timing wise for these hearings, and *Maryland is woefully out of step with the rest of the country*. The summary is as follows:

Length b/t hearings	No. of states	States
Per Request	6	(AZ, IN, NE, MI, MN, OR)
Below 10 Days	2	(MD, WY)
10 Days	9	(WV, PA, NC, NM, NJ, MS, MA, GA, AL)
14-15 Days	19	(WI, WA, VA, VT, TX, TN, SC, OK, ND, MO, KY, IL, ID, HA, FL, DC, DE, CT, CO)
20-21 Days	8	(UT, RI, MT, ME, LA, KS, CA, AK)
30+	4	(AR, NV, NH, SD)
Other	3	(IA: 5-15, OH: 7-10, NY: Unspecified)

The time just after a survivor gets a TPO can be very busy, including possibly looking for new housing, getting medical care, physical or mental, for themselves or any children, beginning the process of applying for public benefits, or seeking and finding legal representation for the FPO hearing. The survivor may be working a full-time job. All of this is on top of experiencing trauma,

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the breakup of a relationship, possibly filing criminal charges, telling family members about what has occurred, and other difficult and challenging things to manage.

Direct legal service providers can confirm that often a petitioner has so much happening that they can't get around to seeking legal services for their hearing until perhaps a day or maybe two prior to the hearing. This does not give the lawyers who do this work adequate time to prepare, gather evidence, and otherwise be ready for the hearing. Additionally, many cases end up getting postponed due to lack of service. While it is not the primary reason for this proposed change, it would allow law enforcement more time to effectively improve service and reduce postponements due to lack of service. And if service is effectuated quickly, the Respondent would benefit from having extra time to seek an attorney and prepare for court should they wish to do so.

Second, SB 433 would also add to the possible relief a court can order if it grants an FPO. Domestic violence service providers and programs know, and have testified before you over the years, that courts and judges feel they are constrained from granting any relief that is not specified in the Maryland Code. Many, many states provide that a court can order payment for financial loss. By adding this form of relief to our law it will allow survivors to make repairs, buy a new phone (this is a particularly frequent form of damage in these cases), and have the respondent pay for it when the cost is incurred, rather than waiting perhaps more than a year for a divorce hearing, or having to sue the respondent in small claims court, which is burdensome for a survivor.

The genesis of this bill was a May 2025 Partners for Justice conference. At a panel about domestic violence attended by legal service providers, lawyers and advocates, when the 50 or so attendees were asked what they would change in our protection order law to be more responsive to the needs of victims/survivors, these were the two things raised overwhelmingly more than any other ideas.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on SB 433.**