



TESTIMONY FOR SB0512
Criminal Law – Stalking – Penalties

Bill Sponsor: Senator Smith

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, Cochair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0512 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

SB0512 strengthens Maryland’s response to stalking by increasing penalties when the victim has an active protective order or when the offender has a prior stalking conviction. Under the bill, penalties may include imprisonment of up to 10 years, a fine of up to \$10,000, or both. These enhanced consequences recognize the heightened danger faced by victims who have already sought court protection or who have been targeted by repeat offenders.

Stalking is not a minor offense—it is a pattern of behavior that creates fear, disrupts lives, and often escalates into more serious violence. When a victim has taken the difficult step of obtaining a protective order, the law must provide meaningful safeguards. SB0512 ensures that violations in these circumstances are treated with the seriousness they deserve, reinforcing the message that Maryland will not tolerate intimidation, harassment, or threats to personal safety.

This bill directly supports the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. Our work is grounded in protecting civil rights, strengthening public safety, and ensuring that Marylanders—especially those most vulnerable—have the full protection of the law. By increasing penalties for offenders who disregard protective orders or who repeatedly engage in stalking, SB0512 promotes accountability, reduces the risk of further harm, and upholds the values of equity and community well-being that guide our advocacy.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0512.