



Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.

Continuing the Missions of the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation, Inc.

☎ 877-VICTIM-1 (877-842-8461)

✉ mail@mdcrimevictims.org

🌐 mdcrimevictims.org

1001 Prince George's Blvd, Suite 750
Upper Marlboro, MD 20774
301-952-0063 (Phone)
301-952-2319 (fax)

1 North Charles Street, Suite 700
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-234-9885 (phone)

March 6, 2026

RE: UNFAVORABLE TO HOUSE BILL 907

Dear Chair Bartlett and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express strong opposition to House Bill 907, which would create a new offense of assault in the third degree.

As an attorney with over 18 years of experience, including service as a prosecutor and now as Deputy Director of the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center (MCVRC), I work closely with victims and survivors navigating the criminal justice system during some of the most difficult moments of their lives.

Under Maryland law, second-degree assault already covers a broad range of harmful conduct, including attempted assault, placing someone in fear of immediate harm, and harmful or offensive physical contact. The conduct described in HB 907—intentionally causing offensive contact, attempting to cause such contact, or placing another person in fear of offensive contact—is already addressed within Maryland's existing assault framework. Judges already consider the varying degrees of seriousness within second-degree assault when making decisions about charging outcomes and sentencing.

Creating a separate third-degree offense would unnecessarily complicate the law while offering little practical benefit. More concerning, the bill proposes a significantly reduced penalty of up to 90 days of incarceration or a \$500 fine, which risks minimizing conduct that victims experience as threatening or violent. Assault cases already too often result in minimal accountability, with the majority of second-degree assault cases ending without incarceration and frequently being placed on the STET docket.

The victims and survivors we represent do not see a need for a lesser degree of assault. Maryland's current assault laws already provide the tools necessary to address these offenses, and the focus should remain on enforcing those laws effectively.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to give House Bill 907 an unfavorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanna D. Mupanduki

Joanna D. Mupanduki, Esq.

Deputy Director

Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center, Inc.