



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)

January 30, 2026

Re: Favorable to HB 138

Dear Chair Bartlett and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center (MCVRC), I urge your support for House Bill 138. MCVRC provides legal services for crime victims throughout Maryland and is the largest nonprofit of its kind in the country. We write on behalf of our clients who have been victims of burglary and sexual assault.

HB 138 appropriately recognizes the profound harm that occurs when sexual contact without consent is committed in connection with a first-, second-, or third-degree burglary. By reclassifying this conduct from a fourth-degree sexual offense to a third-degree sexual offense, the bill acknowledges the heightened fear, trauma, and violation experienced by victims when sexual violence is paired with the invasion of their home or other protected space.

Burglary is not merely a property crime. It is an act that shatters a person's sense of safety and security. When an individual unlawfully enters a space where a victim should feel most protected—and then commits sexual contact without consent—the resulting harm is compounded. Survivors often describe this experience as uniquely terrorizing: the loss of control, the fear of further violence, and the lasting psychological impact of knowing that their most private space was violated.

HB 138 reflects this reality by recognizing that sexual contact committed in the context of a burglary is categorically more dangerous and traumatic than the same conduct occurring absent that invasion. Elevating the offense level sends an important message that Maryland law understands the gravity of this conduct and the lifelong impact it can have on survivors.

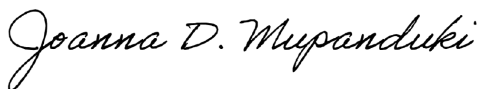
The bill's inclusion of these offenses within the definitions of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III sex offenders—with registration requirements increasing based on the age of the victim—is also appropriate and measured. Age-based tiering recognizes the heightened vulnerability of children and young victims and aligns registration requirements with the seriousness of the offense and the risk posed to the community.

Survivors deserve a justice system that fully acknowledges the fear they experience, the trauma they carry forward, and the lasting consequences of crimes that invade both their bodies and their homes. HB 138 moves Maryland law closer to that goal by ensuring accountability reflects the true nature of the harm inflicted.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 138.

Thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to protecting victims and strengthening public safety.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanna D. Mupanduki". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joanna D. Mupanduki, Esq.
Deputy Director
Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center, Inc.