



BILL NO: House Bill 688
TITLE: Intercepted Communications - Penalty
COMMITTEE: Judiciary
HEARING DATE: February 24, 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 House Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 688.**

Maryland requires the consent of every party to a phone call, video with audio, or conversation to make a recording lawful. Currently, a violation of the wiretap law is a felony and subject to punishment including imprisonment for not more than 5 years or a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both.

House Bill 688 would reclassify a violation of the wiretap law from a felony to a misdemeanor. MNADV supports a victim's ability to use a recording of the violence they suffered in court proceedings. Currently it is a felony for a victim, including victims of domestic violence, to record and document the abuse and violence they experienced and use it to obtain relief from the courts. So many times, people experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault have to be told that they cannot use audio recording of the assault lest they be charged with a felony. And, perhaps even worse, although they have incontrovertible evidence of the assault perpetrated, they cannot use it as evidence in court.

House Bill 688 is an important attempt to remediate Maryland's wiretap laws. We also think thought should be given to the penalty being reduced. We suggest it be passed in conjunction with either HB 132 or HB 802.

For the above stated reasons, the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a **favorable report on HB 688.**

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