



BILL NO: House Bill 1406
TITLE: **Criminal Law - Self-Defense - Prior Acts by Victim**
COMMITTEE: Judiciary
HEARING DATE: March 10, 2026
POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

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 Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 1406 with sponsor amendments.**

House Bill 1406 is a result of discussions regarding other legislation seeking to address the post-conviction needs of survivors of abuse or trafficking. While there are important and meaningful aspects of post-conviction relief, there are currently deficiencies in evidence law for cases involving survivors who have been criminally charged with harming their abusers. Sponsor amendments would turn this bill into a work group to study and develop a plan and legislative recommendations regarding how to update and modernize § 10-916 of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article (Battered Spouse Syndrome) and to determine how trauma-informed evidentiary provisions should be expanded to apply to survivors of sexual assault, child abuse, human trafficking and coercive exploitation. This would include examination of self-defense and partial self-defense by survivors of trauma who are criminally charged for acts against their abusers. The issues raised in this year's HB 84 (cross-file is SB 138) is relevant to this conversation and should be considered by the work group should the bill pass.

The Network fully supports this approach, appreciates being included, and looks forward to working with the sponsor and others to address this important issue.

For the above reasons, **MNADV urges a favorable report on HB 1406 with amendments.**