



Date: March 12, 2026

**Position: Unfavorable**

House Bill 1363 – Criminal Procedure – Domestic Violence Offenders – Registration  
House Judiciary Committee

Dear Chair Bartlett and Committee Members

On behalf of the Center for Hope and the DOVE (Domestic Violence Enhanced) Program at Northwest Hospital, we respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to House Bill 1363. The Center for Hope and the DOVE Program provide trauma-informed care, advocacy, and support services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and community violence across Maryland. Our programs work directly with victims navigating the complex realities of interpersonal violence and the legal system.

House Bill 1363 would require individuals convicted of multiple domestically related offenses to register as domestic violence offenders and would require the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to publish certain information about registrants online. While the intention of this legislation is to enhance safety and accountability, we are concerned that the creation of a public registry for domestic violence offenses may not achieve the intended outcomes for victim safety and could create unintended harm for survivors.

Domestic violence is fundamentally different from other types of offenses that rely on public registries. Unlike stranger-based crimes, domestic violence often occurs within ongoing family relationships involving children, shared housing, financial interdependence, and complex safety planning. A public registry risks oversimplifying these dynamics and may inadvertently place survivors in more dangerous situations if an offender retaliates after registration or public exposure.

Additionally, many survivors rely on flexibility in the criminal justice process, including negotiated resolutions that prioritize immediate safety, financial stability, or family considerations. Policies that add rigid and highly public consequences may discourage some survivors from reporting abuse or cooperating with prosecution if they fear escalation of violence or destabilization of their household.

From a service provider perspective, we are also concerned that the bill focuses primarily on punitive measures without strengthening the evidence-based strategies that more effectively reduce repeat domestic violence. Survivors consistently tell us that their safety depends on access to stable housing, trauma informed counseling, economic stability, and coordinated support services. Investing in prevention, survivor services, and evidence-based offender intervention programs is a more effective approach to improving long term safety for families and communities. We are also concerned that the bill would require the existing sex offender registry infrastructure to

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administer this new registry without additional resources, which could strain an already complex public safety system that requires significant oversight and monitoring. Notably, the information the registry would share is already searchable and available to the public via Maryland Case Search which details criminal convictions, probation before judgment and stet docket dispositions, incidents that are domestically related crimes, and respondents to interim and final protective orders. Arguably, more information is available via Maryland Case Search than a registry that requires at least two convictions.

Our programs work every day with survivors who must make extraordinarily difficult decisions about reporting, prosecution, and family safety. Policies intended to address domestic violence should prioritize survivor autonomy, trauma-informed practices, and strategies proven to reduce harm.

For these reasons, the Center for Hope and the DOVE Program respectfully request an unfavorable report on House Bill 1363.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued commitment to addressing domestic violence in Maryland.

Respectfully submitted,  
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