



Written Testimony for HB450

Criminal Procedure – Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Guyton, et al.

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Just Stalking: Resources, Inc. (dba Just Stalking Maryland Resources)

Person Submitting: Turquoise Williams, MA, VASI, Executive Director

Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Position: Favorable

Just Stalking Maryland Resources is a nonprofit that provides resources to victims and others about stalking. This includes coordination with legal and mental health services, community support, as well as educational and training programs. We support improved, specific policies around stalking in areas such as schools and workplaces. We also advocate for early reporting, simplifying reporting processes, and taking the burden off the victims which is why we **urge the House Judiciary Committee to recommend a favorable report on HB450.**

HB450 would ensure victims of stalking could report crimes without fear of further victimization. Currently, victims are required to request that the court shield identifiable information. However, victims may not know that they can request this until after the fact due to miscommunication or bureaucratic difficulties. Knowing that their stalker (defendant) can gain further knowledge of their private information can lead to fear of further victimization and create barriers to reporting for victims.

HB450 will improve the safety and mental health of victims in Maryland. Victims experience life-altering fear or emotional distress, never knowing when or where their stalker will approach or pursue them. Stalking can escalate to physical violence, sexual assault, or murder. Early intervention, such as provided by **HB450**, reduces the likelihood that victims will experience significant consequences such as injury, chronic illness, depression, or PTSD.

HB450 would be an additional step to provide safety and peace of mind for victims, allowing them to report their crimes without fear of further victimization. We thank the committee for its consideration of this critically important bill for Maryland stalking victims.

Just Stalking Maryland Resources urges the House Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 450.



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