



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

[www.womensdemocraticclub.org](http://www.womensdemocraticclub.org)

**HB 0084 - Providing Alternatives Through Healing  
for Justice-Involved Individuals (PATH Act)**

**Judiciary Committee – February 5, 2026**

**SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges passage of HB 0084. This bill provides a legislative solution for the injustice faced by women, especially women of color, who are incarcerated for actions related to surviving domestic violence while the abusers often go unpunished. With the enactment, evidence of domestic violence, when a contributing factor in the commission of a crime, can be considered as a mitigating factor at sentencing and during sentence modification and reduction hearings.

A total of 54.4% of Maryland women report having experienced intimate partner violence within their lifetime, higher than the national average. Roughly 38% of women experience physical violence, 40.9% sexual violence, 51.5% psychological violence, and 12.5% stalking.<sup>1</sup> Research indicates upwards of 70% of incarcerated women have been victims of intimate partner violence (IPV).<sup>2</sup> Too often, survivors of this violence are often framed as unstable and are ignored and marginalized. Too often, when a victim of domestic violence commits a crime, her trauma is treated as irrelevant.

This is grossly unfair and results in unnecessarily lengthy sentences that do nothing to improve public safety but do extend the trauma of the victim and the victim's family. Inequitable sentencing is expensive for the state. Conservative estimates peg the cost of incarceration at more than \$112 thousand, per person, per year.<sup>3</sup> On the other side of the ledger, the cost of implementing HB 0084 will be minimal.

**We ask for your support for HB 0084 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.**

Cynthia Rubenstein  
WDC President

Deborah Williams  
WDC The Basics Committee

Kate Stein  
WDC Advocacy Chair

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<sup>1</sup> *Helping ourselves to Transform*, The Path Act Impact Report 2026

<sup>2</sup> [https://law.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Consolidated-Report\\_From-the-Cradle-to-the-Grave\\_Criminalization-of-Survivors.pdf](https://law.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Consolidated-Report_From-the-Cradle-to-the-Grave_Criminalization-of-Survivors.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://usafacts.org/articles/how-much-do-states-spend-on-prisons>