



TESTIMONY FOR HB0631
Criminal Law - Threats Against State or Local Official - Penalties

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Schindler

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0361 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Getting threats, and experiencing violence is sadly becoming more common for public officials. We have seen horrific stories in the media and there is little doubt that what we see in the media is just a fraction of what public officials are seeing and not disclosing.

This bill, if enacted, would increase the penalties for threatening public officials – including a state official, a local official, a deputy State’s Attorney, an assistant State’s Attorney, or an assistant Public Defender. It would change the crime from a misdemeanor to a felony with the possibility of a 10-year sentence, and would increase the financial penalty from \$2,500 to \$5,000.

Our members hope that by making the penalties so much stiffer, people will not feel emboldened to threaten anyone in public office.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.