

DEL. DANA JONES, DISTRICT 30A  
*President*

DEL. MICHELE GUYTON, DISTRICT 42B  
*1st Vice-President*

DEL. JENNIFER WHITE HOLLAND, DISTRICT 10  
*2nd Vice-President*

DEL. SARAH WOLEK, DISTRICT 16  
*Secretary*



DEL. LINDA FOLEY, DISTRICT 15  
*Treasurer*

DEL. KAREN R. TOLES, DISTRICT 25  
*Parliamentarian*

DEL. JACQUELINE T. ADDISON, DISTRICT 45  
*At Large*

DEL. KYM TAYLOR, DISTRICT 23  
*At Large*

**WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND**  
**THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**February 5, 2026**

**To: Delegate J. Sandy Barlett, Jr, Chair.**

**Delegate Debra Davis, Vice Chair**

**Judiciary Committee**

The Maryland Women's Caucus is proud to express its support for **HB 0084 – Criminal Procedure – Sentencing – Domestic Violence as a Mitigating Factor (Providing Alternatives Through Healing for Justice-Involved Individuals (PATH) Act)**.

HB 0084 authorizes a court to consider evidence that a defendant was a victim of domestic violence and that the abuse significantly contributed to the commission of the offense as a mitigating factor at sentencing for certain crimes of violence identified under § 14-101 of the Criminal Law Article. The bill expressly excludes murder, sexual crimes, child abuse, and other specified offenses.

If the court determines that domestic violence was a significant contributing factor to the defendant's conduct, the court must consider that finding during sentencing. The legislation authorizes the court to impose a sentence below the sentencing guidelines or mandatory minimum, or to modify a previously imposed sentence where appropriate.

This legislation recognizes the well-documented psychological and behavioral impacts of prolonged domestic violence. Survivors of intimate partner violence may experience trauma-related conditions, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and what has historically been referred to as battered spouse syndrome. These conditions can affect perception of threat, decision-making, and responses to coercion or abuse. Incorporating this context into sentencing decisions promotes a more individualized and equitable approach to justice.

For the Maryland Women's Caucus, HB 0084 aligns with our mission to advance policies that support women and families across the State. Domestic violence disproportionately impacts women, and fairness within the criminal justice system requires courts to consider the broader circumstances that contribute to criminal conduct.

For these reasons, the Maryland Women's Caucus respectfully urges a **favorable report on HB 0084**.