

Delegate Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 25, 2020

Re: Support for – HB945 - Criminal Procedure - Sentencing and Disposition - Community Impact Statement

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Western District Community Relations Council, Sandtown Winchester Condo Assoc. and The Fulton Community Assoc., we are in full support of House Bill 945: Criminal Procedure - Sentencing and Disposition - Community Impact Statement, which would authorize and empower residents of a community impacted by a crime of which a defendant, or respondent in juvenile court, has been convicted to submit a certain community impact statement during sentencing or disposition of criminal or juvenile cases. This bill would also require a court to consider certain community impact statements.

The effects of crime in our communities are numerous and has crippled the growth and development of our neighborhoods in the Western District boundaries and others. Some of these adverse effects are decreased property values, reduced safety, vacant houses, departure of existing businesses, avoidance of new businesses and new home owners. Crime has been shown to have a dramatic effect on the quality of life, health, and the interpersonal relations between members of communities because crime creates fear. The more that people are aware of crime, the more they tend to fear becoming victims of crime.

Community impact statements recognize that the effects of crime can be far-reaching. Sometimes the victim of a crime is more than one person - it is a community. The purpose of a community impact statement is to allow the community the opportunity to explain to the Court and the offender how the crime has affected their community. With few exceptions, crime is going to have an unequivocally negative effect on communities and its residents; bringing people together and taking action against crime is necessary, for engaging and restoring our communities after a crime has occurred.

To begin the restoration of our communities, we need legislation that gives a voice to our communities in the courtroom. For this reason, Please support House Bill 945.

Sincerely,

Inez Robb President of the Western District Community Relations Council, Sandtown Winchester Condo Assoc. and The Fulton Community Assoc 410-728-2726

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