



**BILL NO:** Senate Bill 425  
**TITLE:** Workgroup on Screening Related to Adverse Childhood Experiences  
**COMMITTEE:** Health and Government Operations and Ways and Means  
**HEARING DATE:** March 23, 2021  
**POSITION:** **SUPPORT AS AMENDED**

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The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the House Health and Government Operations and Ways and Means Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 425 as amended.**

MNADV is appreciative and supportive of the Senate **adopted amendment that includes the federally recognized state domestic violence coalition on the Workgroup** to ensure that the unique needs of children exposed to domestic violence and families experiencing domestic violence can be addressed.

Senate Bill 425 creates a workgroup charged with the many responsibilities including to update, improve, and develop screening tools for primary care providers to identify and treat minors who have a mental health disorder that may be caused by or related to an adverse childhood experience; to study best practices in Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data summaries and trends reports nationally; and to develop recommendations for unifying and coordinating child- and family-serving agencies to better link them with needed interventions and services. MNADV supports these efforts since early identification of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed treatment can help prevent future incidents of domestic violence and we offer a network of services providers across Maryland. State domestic violence coalitions were identified by the CDC as one of the vital partners to help prevent and mitigate the harms caused by ACEs.<sup>1</sup>

ACEs are known to have long-lasting and wide-ranging impact on those that have experienced one or more ACEs. One of the ten ACEs is whether a child observed their mother treated violently. In the original CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences Study 12.7% of participants indicated they had experienced that trauma.<sup>2</sup> This does not include all the other types of domestic violence that may also occur in the home including psychological abuse, economic abuse, or verbal abuse. Further, exposure to any ACE increases the likelihood that a person may either become a victim or a perpetrator of intimate

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<sup>1</sup> Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence, [https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CDC\\_preventingACEs.pdf](https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CDC_preventingACEs.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/about.html>

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partner violence.<sup>3</sup> Children exposed to intimate partner violence often experience other ACEs, most notably child abuse.<sup>4</sup>

Understanding the power and control dynamics of domestic violence and the impact of exposure to domestic violence at a young age is imperative to help prevent intimate partner violence and victimization in those children exposed. Effective screening tools can identify current exposure to domestic violence in the home that can lead to appropriate supports and assistance for all the impacted family members.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on SB 425 as amended.**

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<sup>3</sup> Franchek-Roa KM, Tiwari A, Connor AL, Campbell J. Impact of Childhood Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence and Other Adversities. *J Korean Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry* 2017;28:156-167. <https://doi.org/10.5765/jkacap.2017.28.3.156>

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*