



State of Maryland
Office of the Attorney General

January 25, 2021

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair, Judiciary Committee
FROM: Carrie J. Williams, Assistant Attorney General
RE: Attorney General's Support for HB 277

The Attorney General urges the Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 277. House Bill 277 creates a “continuing course of conduct” modality of first-degree physical child abuse, similar to the continuing course of conduct statute for child sexual abuse.

Under current law, a caregiver who repeatedly abuses a child faces only second-degree child abuse charges unless prosecutors can show that a single incident of abuse caused “severe physical injury.” Multiple counts of second degree child abuse can be equally difficult to prove where a child is too young to provide information about the timing and incidents of abuse.

House Bill 277 will allow serial child abusers to be convicted of first-degree child abuse—a crime of violence. It provides additional protection for the most vulnerable victims. The Attorney General urges the Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 277.

cc: Members of the Committee