



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
US ARMY INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND  
OFFICE OF THE STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE  
4217 MORRISON STREET  
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-5030

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

February 8, 2022

**HEARING TESTIMONY FOR SENATE BILL 375**

NOTE: This testimony is not intended as an official statement on behalf of the United States Army, the Department of Defense or the United States Government, but is limited to the personal opinions of the author.

**I am writing in support of Senate Bill 375**, entitled: "Crimes- Interception of Wire, Oral, or Electronic Communications- Exception for Imminent Danger". This bill will benefit victims of domestic violence, among others.

I have had clients who are victims of domestic violence ask whether they would be permitted to record their abusers using "one party consent" (their own consent when they agree to make a recording). I have had to advise them that under the current "all party consent" rule in the Maryland Wiretapping statute, they cannot because the recording would be inadmissible and they could be charged with a felony for making the recording if the abuser did not know about or consent to the recording.

Unfortunately, the military is not immune from domestic violence, although the frequency of incidents is significantly less than in the general civilian population. In 2021, there were 57 Army and Air Force domestic violence cases at Fort Meade.

As you are probably aware, crimes such as domestic violence often take place in the home where third-party adult witnesses are absent. Allowing victims to create recordings of their abuse and permitting these recordings to be admitted in Maryland courts in criminal prosecutions would go a long way towards protecting victims while bringing their abusers to justice. The current "all party consent" requirement, creates a safe harbor for abusers by rendering recorded evidence of abusive behavior inadmissible, while exposing the victim to felony charges. This bill helps reverse that miscarriage of justice by instead offering domestic violence survivors the safe harbor to make and admit recordings of their abuse.

Maryland is currently in the minority of ten (10) states requiring all-party consent for audio recordings. The Federal Wiretapping statute and Military Rules of Evidence along with thirty-seven (37) states and the District of Columbia currently have one-party consent laws. Three (3) other states have exceptions that make audio recordings at civil protective order hearings or in emergency situations admissible. It is long overdue that in cases of domestic violence, one-party consent recordings should be admissible, particularly when victims seek to prove a violation of an existing protective order.

Although not perfect, SB375 is a strong step in the right direction to help military victims of domestic violence present credible corroborating evidence against the offenders. I therefore conclude that SB375 will benefit military families.

Thank you for your attention.

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**Fort George G. Meade, Maryland**, is an installation dedicated to providing quality support to service members, Department of Defense civilian employees, family members, and military retirees. Fort Meade strives to be the Nation's Preeminent Center for Information, Intelligence and Cyber.

Every day, more than 100,000 people seek the services Fort Meade offers. Its primary mission is to provide a wide range of services to more than 119 partner organizations from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard, as well as to several federal agencies including the National Security Agency, Defense Media Activity, Defense Information Systems Agency, the Defense Courier Service and the U.S. Cyber Command.

The installation lies approximately five miles east of Interstate 95 and one-half mile east of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, between Maryland State routes 175 and 198. Fort Meade is located near the communities of Odenton, Laurel, Columbia and Jessup, and is home to approximately 62,000 employees, both uniformed and civilian. Nearly 11,000 family members reside on-post. Fort Meade is Maryland's largest employer and is the second-largest workforce of any Army installation in the U.S. In response to the military's Base Realignment and Closure plan, construction of new facilities has now been completed for Defense Adjudication Activities, the Defense Information Systems Agency and the Defense Media Activity.

The **Legal Assistance Division** provides free legal services to Active-Duty service-members, retirees and dependents in a wide variety of areas including tax assistance, domestic relations, estate planning, consumer law, military administrative appeals and the like. It was awarded the Army's Chief of Staff Award for excellence in Legal Assistance two of the last three years.

**Mr. Seltzer** served for more than four years on Active Duty at the Third Infantry Division (Mechanized) and the U.S. Army Legal Services Agency's Environmental Law Division of the Headquarters, Department of the Army. He served as a Legal Assistance Attorney at Fort Meade and Fort Belvoir, Virginia from 2008 to 2018, and as the Chief of Legal Assistance at Fort Meade beginning in 2018. Mr. Seltzer is licensed to practice law in Maryland, Washington, D.C., Georgia and New York. He is an active member of the Maryland State Bar Association's Veteran's Affairs and Military Law Committee, is a graduate of the George Washington University (1993) and the University of Maryland School of Law (1999) and is a native of Silver Spring.

# Wiretapping Consent Jurisdictional Survey

## One Party Consent States (37+ DC)

Alabama	Nebraska
Alaska	New Jersey
Arizona	New Mexico
Arkansas	New York
Colorado	North Carolina
Connecticut	North Dakota
Washington, D.C.	Ohio
Georgia	Oklahoma
Hawaii	Rhode Island
Idaho	South Carolina
Indiana	South Dakota
Iowa	Tennessee
Kansas	Texas
Kentucky	Utah
Louisiana	Vermont
Maine	Virginia
Minnesota	West Virginia
Mississippi	Wisconsin
Missouri	Wyoming

## Additional One Party Consent Jurisdictions (2)

Federal Rules of Evidence  
Military Rules of Evidence

## All Party Consent, but One Party Consent Exceptions for Civil Protective Order Hearings or Emergency Cases (3)

California  
Nevada  
Washington

## All Party Consent, but One Party Consent Exceptions for Child Abuse and Proving a Violation of a Protective Order (1)

Florida

## One Party Consent but State Privacy Law Requires All Party Consent (1)

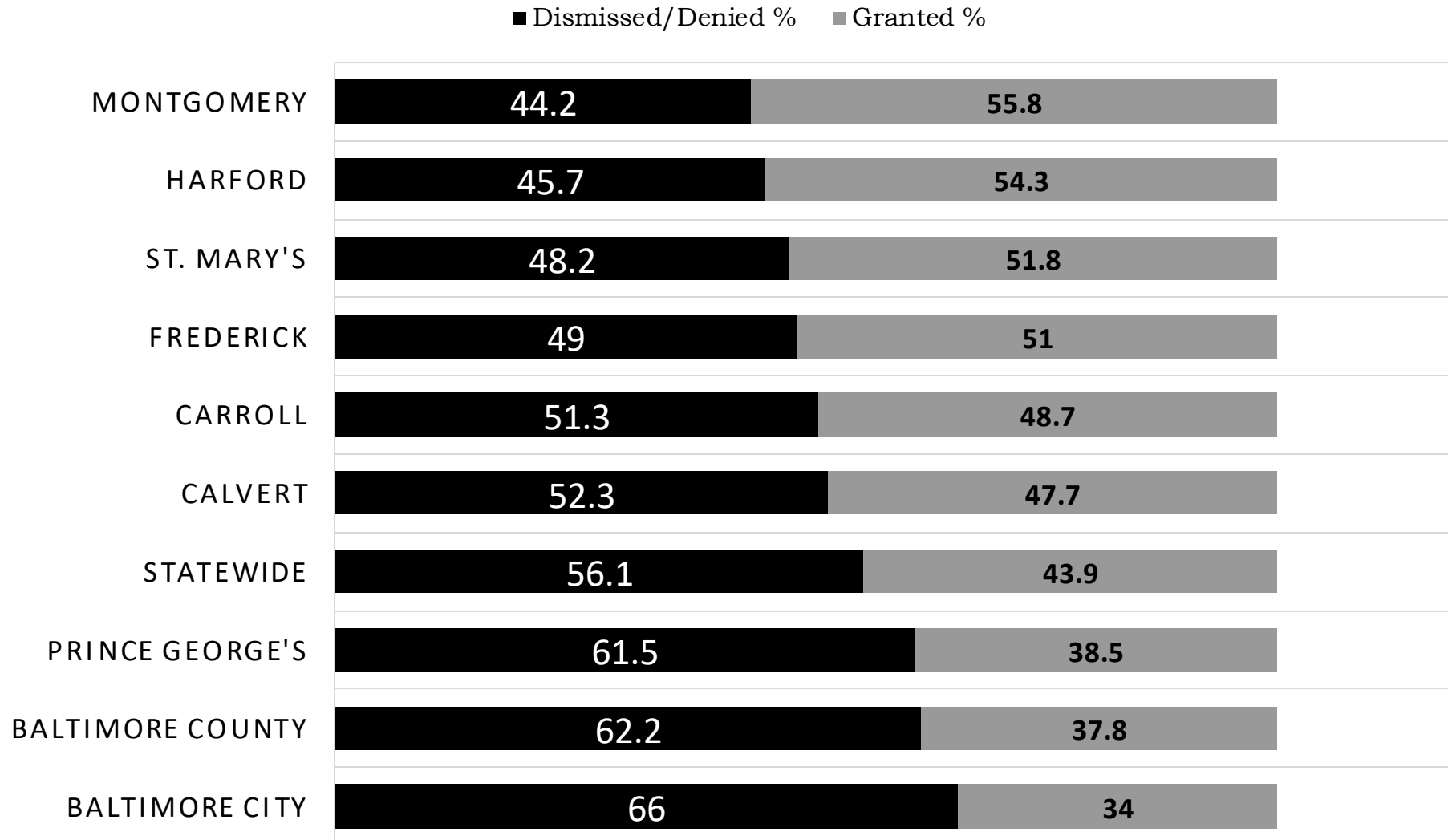
Delaware

## All Party Consent Required, No Exceptions (8)

Illinois  
**Maryland**  
Massachusetts  
Michigan  
Montana  
New Hampshire\*  
Oregon  
Pennsylvania

\* Felony to intercept without consent of all parties; misdemeanor if recorder was a party to the recording.

## CIVIL PROTECTIVE ORDERS DISMISSED/DENIED VS. GRANTED IN 2021 BY MARYLAND JURISDICTION



## REPRESENTATION IN CIVIL PROTECTIVE ORDERS IN 2021 BY MARYLAND JURISDICTION

