



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB745**

**Judiciary - Family Law - Protective Orders - Crimes of Violence and Stalking  
Testimony in SUPPORT**

Chair Clippinger, Vice-Chair Bartlett, and members of the House Judiciary Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide favorable consideration of House Bill 745, a bill that would allow victims of non-intimate partner stalking to obtain added protections from their stalker and a path to a permanent protective order.

In Maryland, the current structure of protective and peace orders provides unequal protection for victims of stalking based on the nature of their relationship with the stalker. While protective orders offer comprehensive safeguards, they are largely only available to those who have had an intimate relationship with their assailant. This leaves individuals stalked by acquaintances, colleagues, neighbors, or strangers with limited legal recourse through peace orders, which do not offer the same level of protection.

House Bill 745, as drafted, would ensure that all victims of stalking have equal access to protective measures. By including stalking among the offenses that qualify an individual to petition for a protective order, the bill ensures that victims, regardless of their relationship with the stalker, have access to legal safeguards.

There are several distinctions between protective orders and peace orders. A protective order, distinct from other orders, not only permits the removal of firearms from the stalker and lasts for a longer duration of one year, but it also opens a pathway for victims to secure a permanent protective order, significantly reducing the repetitive and traumatic process of frequent court visits required for renewals. In addition, victims seeking a protective order may have their filing fees waived, while victims seeking a peace order must pay \$86 every six months that they need protection.

Some advocates have expressed concerns about amending the protective order statute to include non-IPV victims. In response, I will be submitting an amendment for consideration by the committee that would achieve the same goals of the bill – extending the length of the order to one year, allowing the discretion to a judge to remove firearms, and providing a path to a permanent order – but doing so under the peace order statute for non-IPV victims.

This bill serves to protect Marylanders from the dangers of stalking. Including stalking in the list of offenses available to be petitioned for a protective order will ensure Marylanders the safety they should always be entitled to.

**Thank you for your committee's consideration, and I respectfully request a favorable report on HB745.**