



Celebrating 50 Years of Advancing Justice

Dear Jessica,

Today we celebrate and remember the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King. And while state and federal government agencies are closed in recognition, the Maryland General Assembly will convene this evening to continue the important work of this legislative session.

Among the bills being heard in committee on Thursday this week is [House Bill 13 - Hate Crimes – Civil Remedy](#). This legislation, if passed, would create a private civil right of action for victims of hate crimes, allowing for both economic and non-economic damages. In addition to deterring criminal activity, they possess important symbolic meaning that signals to targeted communities that the government cares and that law enforcement will take their concerns seriously.

The second significant bill being heard this week, [House Bill 4 – Criminal Law – Sex Crimes – Repeal of Spousal Defense](#), is one of the most significant bills related to sexual assault and physical safety. For the past four years, the WLC has stood beside the Maryland Coalition for Sexual Assault and other partners to fight for the repeal of an archaic law that allows marriage to serve as a complete defense to some sex crimes. Sexual assault violates a woman's bodily integrity, freedom, and self-determination; the harm is not mitigated because the rape occurred in her marriage bed, but rather is compounded. It is beyond time to end this offensive practice.

There are already almost 300 bills that were pre-filed and awaiting a bill hearing. As we continue through January, we know that number will grow exponentially. Among those already filed are bills related to child custody, employment accommodations, and incarcerated women. We also know to expect a package of bills related to reproductive health and abortion, the gender pay gap, and gun safety for victims of domestic violence.

As each bill is heard in committee, we will need each of you to contact the members of the committee and let them know that you care about the issue. See below for the committee information for this week's bills and keep following our alerts for upcoming bill hearings.

Onward,

So what can you do?

Contact members of the House Judiciary Committee this week and tell them to *vote favorably* on:

HB 4 – Criminal Law – Sex Crimes – Repeal of Spousal Defense

HB 13 – Hate Crime – Civil Remedy

Send the Committee an email [HERE](#).

P.S. As always, if you appreciate the work we do, whether in the General Assembly or through our [direct legal services](#) across the State, [give here!](#) And if this email was forwarded to you by a friend, make sure to sign up for our legislative alerts [here!](#)

P.P.S. **Save the Date for the WLC's Annual Celebration and Awards Ceremony on May 3rd at 6pm at Citron!** Join us in presenting the Rosalyn B. Bell Award to Marla Zide, Esq.; the Dorothy Beatty Memorial Award to Robyn Elliott; and the Access to Justice Award to Natasha M. Dartigue, Esq. and Debbie Feinstein, Esq. For more information or to buy tickets, click [HERE](#).

P.P.P.S. Save the date for these upcoming events from our partners and friends!

[Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault's 2023 Legislative Reception](#) - Thursday, January 19th at 6:30pm at Red Red Wine Bar, Annapolis

[Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women's 2023 Legislative Briefing](#) - Wednesday, February 1st at 5pm on Zoom

[Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence Annual Memorial Service](#) - Tuesday, February 21st at 4pm on Zoom

The 2023 Gender Justice Rally will be held February 27th in Annapolis. More details to come!

Have an event you'd like to share with us? Send us an [email](#)!

About The Women's Law Center of Maryland

The vision of the Women's Law Center of Maryland is a legal system that provides justice and fairness for women. The Women's Law Center's mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and autonomy of women throughout the State. We work towards this goal by providing direct legal representation, information and referral services, and legislative advocacy.

Our efforts to promote justice, fairness, and equality for women are only possible because of friends like you.

Give Today

The Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc. is a charitable organization designated as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). A copy of our financial statement is available upon request. Documents and information submitted under the State of Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State of Maryland, Annapolis, MD 21401 for the cost of copying and postage.



Women's Law Center | 305 W. Chesapeake Avenue, Suite 201, Towson, MD 21204

[Unsubscribe jmorgan@wlcmd.org](mailto:jmorgan@wlcmd.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by admin@wlcmd.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!