



MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER

FROM OUR DIRECTORS



HB 853 Moves to the Senate – Your Voice is Needed!

We have an important update regarding House Bill 853. The bill has moved out of the Judiciary Committee and passed the House. Recently, a hearing took place before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee on March 25, 2025, at the Senate Office Building. We requested support at this hearing, and eight different homicide survivor families were represented, along with many others who submitted written testimony against this bill. Thank you everyone who attended as the bill was not heard until 5:45 PM after many had been waiting since 1 PM that afternoon. We are grateful for all the support that ensured our voices were heard. However, **our work is not finished.**

HB 853 is a concerning piece of legislation that would allow violent offenders who committed their crimes between the ages of 18 and 25 to petition for resentencing after serving just 20 years, regardless of their original sentence. The only exceptions are those serving sentences of Life Without Parole (LWOP) or those with convictions requiring registration as sex offenders. This means individuals convicted of heinous crimes—such as murder, arson, serious assaults, and other violent offenses—could petition the court to have their sentences reduced, potentially multiple times. This could force victims' families to relive their trauma repeatedly. During the hearing, proponents of the bill expressed the belief that even those sentenced to LWOP or for sex offenses deserve another chance, despite the existing 17 opportunities for convicted offenders to petition the court in various ways for reductions or releases. All of these hearings are in addition to any parole hearings to which the offender is entitled.

We still need your help and ask that you take action now to prevent this bill from moving forward.

The passage of HB 853 would:

- Undermine the justice system by reducing accountability for violent offenders.
- Create a revolving door for resentencing, forcing victims to repeatedly fight for justice.
- Ignore the real risks of recidivism—statistics show that even violent offenders released after decades still pose a significant danger to society, especially when released at younger ages.

We need every one of you to reach out to your Senators to oppose this dangerous bill.

What You Can Do Right Now:

(1) Contact your Senator and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee to urge them to NO on HB 853 both in the committee and if it gets to the floor.

- (2) Spread the word—share this message with family, friends, and community members.
- (3) Stay engaged—we need your help!

Stay tuned for updates and thank you for taking action!

Joanna D. Mupanduki
Deputy Director

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Hi. I'm Sandra. You may have seen me around at events or on our monthly Lunch and Learn series. I guess I should start from the beginning, since I've never officially introduced myself. Sandra is defined as "defender of mankind" or "protector of humanity". I knew this meaning as a child and I grew to become someone who wanted to make a positive impact on the world, no matter how small. I became a non-profit girl and have been for over 20 years and am led by my heart and ethics.

When I came to MCVRC in 2021, I wanted to create an event just for our families. For the people who matter most. So our community didn't feel alone. So our community could surround each other and lift each other. So we could come together and when the time came fight injustice side-by-side. So we could see each other in person. Share tears. Share smiles. This event to do ALL these things, is our Make a Difference Walk and Resource Fair.

- This event serves to educate our community on their rights and their resources.
- This event serves to celebrate those who are heroes for victims.
- This event serves to remember the lives lost and recenter us on what is important.

We invite you to attend. Be a part of our community. Bring your family, friends, neighbors, kids, dogs... just come. Grab your ticket [here](#), just click donate/tickets.

And if you feel it in your heart, fundraise for us so that our mission can continue to grow and touch those who need us. If you don't want to fundraise, you can also donate to this gal on her [personal page and team](#). 😊

Sandra Sanna-Buckles
Development and Public Relations Specialist

BURIAL PLOTS AVAILABLE

We are grateful to William and Jean Tighe and Yancy Seitz for their generous donation of burial plots at Lorraine Park Cemetery.

These four plots are available to families of crime victims, offering peace during their time of grief.

If you or someone you know is in need, please contact Jennifer Abell, Chief Finance & Operations Officer, at Jabell@mdcrimevictims.org.

MORE INFO ON HB 853

If you missed the hearing on March 25th, you can catch up and watch the full session [HERE](#).

We also held our Lunch and Learn and delved more into this bill. You can click [HERE](#) to watch it.

We need **YOUR** help in stopping this bill.

Contact Senator Bill Ferguson to help us stop this bill

Contact:

bill.ferguson@senate.state.md.us

410-841-3600

This is a critical moment, and your support is essential to protect victims, uphold justice, and keep our communities safe. Let's ensure our elected officials know that Marylanders stand against HB 853!

UPCOMING EVENTS

1. Survivors of Homicide Victims Support Group

PLEASE NOTE that the next meeting will take place on **Thursday, April 3, 2025, and will be held on Thursday's moving forward.** It will be held in a hybrid format, both virtually and in person at the Upper Marlboro Office (1001 Prince George's Blvd, Suite 750, Upper Marlboro, MD).

The Support Group is a safe place for friends and family members of victims of homicide to meet, discuss, and support each other. All participants need to call us and request a referral to the homicide support group only (if you prefer individual counseling, we offer that too). **You can reach MCVRC at 877-VICTIM1 to get put on the referral list.**

2. 4th Annual Make a Difference Walk and Resource Fair



4th Annual

MAKE A DIFFERENCE WALK and RESOURCE FAIR



CONNECTING



KINSHIP



HEALING



SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 2025
Watkins Regional Park, Upper Marlboro, MD

Thank you for your support



TROLLINGER LAW



Resource Partners Attending:



Constructing & Empowering A
Women's Journey Inc.



We're excited to invite you to our upcoming Make a Difference Walk/Resource Fair, a FREE event for everyone to attend! This is your chance to make a difference while enjoying a day of community and connection.

Please create a team and/or register to attend and, if you feel it in your heart to support us, you can also set a goal to fundraise. We are also offering a free yard sign if you raise \$250 by April 7th!

If you have any questions, please contact Sandra Sanna-Buckles at ssannabuckles@mdcrimevictims.org or call/text 240-335-4037

Click [HERE](#) to register!

3. Save The Date: Ceremony of Remembrance

October 11, 2025

Join us at the Ceremony of Remembrance, a peaceful event dedicated to honoring those who⁴ lives were tragically lost to criminal violence. This meaningful ceremony will take place at the Prince

George's County Courthouse, where the pathway and garden not only honor those taken from us but also symbolize your journey of healing and remembrance.

The bricks laid along the path represent the lives lost to violence, and each one serves as a powerful reminder of the impact these individuals had on their communities and families. We invite you to be a part of this moving tribute as we come together in solidarity to remember, reflect, and heal.

More details coming soon!

In the meantime, you can submit your brick order form [here](#) OR submit an online order [here](#)

4. 35th Maryland Statewide Memorial Services



You are cordially invited to the 35th Statewide Memorial Services for Crime Victims and Their Families. The services are presented by the Charles, Frederick, Howard, and Talbot County State's Attorneys' Offices, the Maryland State Board of Victim Services and the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy.

To RSVP, please click [HERE](#)

#WHYWEFIGHTWEDNESDAY



Each day we find motivation to continue to be a voice for those who need one. We started these posts on social media last year, but since some of you are not on social media, we are now including our monthly motivations here.

These are a small fraction of the faces that motivate us. Their names and photos are taken from our Ceremony of Remembrance event slideshow. Each Wednesday, we share a life that was taken on that date and we celebrate them and use their face to remind us that crime is not victimless. These people are real and their families miss them. These faces are "why we fight."



**Do you have events you want us to attend?
Do you have something you would like to
share in our next newsletter?**

[EMAIL US AND LET US KNOW!](#)

Feeling the love ❤️ ? Share it here by supporting our work 💪 ! Your 💰 goes a long way to support victims of crime and their families!

Donate now!

MCVRC is a non-profit organization funded by government and community grants, and generous contributions from former clients and the public who believe in our cause.

Copies of this newsletter will be made available on our website: [Access it here!](#)



Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.
1001 Prince George's Blvd, Ste 750, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774

Email not displaying correctly?

[View it in your browser](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)