

1/29/20

Legislative Alert!
**Support HB233/SB212 - Criminal Law - Assault in
the First Degree - Suffocation or Strangulation**

HB233/SB212 is one of the bills on our [2020 Agenda](#) and will be heard this week in the House Judiciary and Senate Judicial Proceedings committees. Please take action as described. We have included the emails for the committee members at the bottom for your convenience.

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HB233/SB212 Criminal Law - Assault in the First Degree - Suffocation or Strangulation would decrease the risk of femicide by designating intentional suffocation and strangulation as Assault in the First Degree.

Non-fatal strangulation is one of the most significant risk factors for femicide. Studies have shown that prior non-fatal strangulation is associated with a six-fold increase in the chances of attempted homicide and a seven-fold increase in the chances of completed homicide.

Under current law, suffocation and strangulation is classified as Assault in the Second Degree (*Criminal Law §3-203*), which puts such offenses in the same legal category as a slap. This bill would reclassify suffocation and strangulation as Assault in the First Degree (*Criminal Law §3-202*.) The measure creates nuance in the Code and recognizes that suffocation and strangulation, which are heinous in their own right and a red-flag of future and more extreme violence against women, are to be treated as a serious form of assault.

The bill redesignates intentional suffocation and strangulation from Assault in the Second Degree (*Criminal Law §3-203*) to Assault in the First Degree (*Criminal Law §3-202*).

We strongly urge you to contact members of the House Judiciary and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to urge their support for HB233/SB212.

Email addresses for the [Judiciary Committee](#) members (cut and paste into your email application):

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The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women's groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent, voice for Maryland women and families. The group advocates for progressive legislation and policy that promotes and protects the well being of Maryland women and their families and provides them opportunities to develop their full potential.

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