

Approved May 14, 1991.

**CHAPTER 390**

**(House Bill 635)**

AN ACT concerning

**Domestic Violence – Protective Order – ~~Elderly and~~ Vulnerable Adults**

FOR the purpose of extending certain domestic violence laws to specifically include alleged abuse of a vulnerable adult; authorizing certain individuals to file a certain petition with the court to obtain a protective order for alleged abuse of a vulnerable adult; requiring a local department of social services to investigate certain alleged abuse of a vulnerable adult in a certain manner; authorizing the court to issue certain orders to protect a vulnerable adult; altering a certain definition; defining certain terms; and generally relating to alleged abuse of certain vulnerable adults.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Family Law

Section 4-501, 4-504, 4-505, and 4-506

Annotated Code of Maryland

(1984 Volume and 1990 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article – Family Law**

4-501.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(b) (1) “Abuse” means any of the following acts committed by a household member against another household member:

(i) an act that causes serious bodily harm;

(ii) an act that places another in fear of imminent serious bodily harm;

[or]

(iii) abuse of a child, as defined in Title 5, Subtitle 7 of this article; OR

(IV) ABUSE OF A VULNERABLE ADULT.

(2) Nothing in this subtitle shall be construed to prohibit reasonable corporal punishment, in light of the age and condition of the child, from being performed by a parent or stepparent of the child.

(c) “Court” means the District Court or a circuit court in this State.