

HOUSE BILL 284

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2lr0884
CF SB 20

By: **Delegate Crutchfield**

Introduced and read first time: January 17, 2022

Assigned to: Judiciary

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 5, 2022

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Criminal Procedure – Out of Court Statements – Child Victims and Witnesses**

3 FOR the purpose of authorizing the court to admit into evidence in certain criminal
4 proceedings certain out of court statements made by a child victim who is under a
5 certain age and an alleged victim or a witness in a case concerning a crime of
6 violence, subject to certain requirements; and generally relating to the admissibility
7 of out of court statements of child victims and witnesses in criminal proceedings.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
9 Article – Criminal Procedure
10 Section 11–304
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

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

15 **Article – Criminal Procedure**

16 11–304.

17 (a) In this section, “statement” means:

18 (1) an oral or written assertion; or

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 (2) nonverbal conduct intended as an assertion, including sounds, gestures,
2 demonstrations, drawings, and similar actions.

3 (b) Subject to subsections (c), (d), and (e) of this section, the court may admit into
4 evidence in a juvenile court proceeding or in a criminal proceeding an out of court statement
5 to prove the truth of the matter asserted in the statement made by a child victim OR
6 WITNESS who:

7 (1) (I) is under the age of 13 years; and

8 [(2)] (II) is [the] AN alleged victim or [the] A child alleged to need
9 assistance in the case before the court concerning:

10 [(i)] 1. child abuse under § 3–601 or § 3–602 of the Criminal Law
11 Article;

12 [(ii)] 2. rape or sexual offense under §§ 3–303 through 3–307 of
13 the Criminal Law Article;

14 [(iii)] 3. attempted rape in the first [degree] or [in the] second
15 degree under §§ 3–309 and 3–310 of the Criminal Law Article; [or]

16 [(iv)] 4. in a juvenile court proceeding, abuse or neglect as defined
17 in § 5–701 of the Family Law Article; **OR**

18 **5. NEGLECT OF A MINOR UNDER § 3–602.1 OF THE**
19 **CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE; OR**

20 **(2) (I) IS UNDER THE AGE OF 13 YEARS; AND**

21 **(II) IS AN ALLEGED VICTIM OR A WITNESS IN A CASE BEFORE**
22 **THE COURT CONCERNING A CRIME OF VIOLENCE AS DEFINED UNDER § 14–101 OF**
23 **THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE.**

24 (c) An out of court statement may be admissible under this section only if the
25 statement was made to and is offered by a person acting lawfully in the course of the
26 person's profession when the statement was made who is:

27 (1) a physician;

28 (2) a psychologist;

29 (3) a nurse;

30 (4) a social worker;

1 (5) a principal, vice principal, teacher, or school counselor at a public or
2 private preschool, elementary school, or secondary school;

3 (6) a counselor licensed or certified in accordance with Title 17 of the
4 Health Occupations Article; or

5 (7) a therapist licensed or certified in accordance with Title 17 of the
6 Health Occupations Article.

7 (d) (1) Under this section, an out of court statement by a child victim OR
8 WITNESS may come into evidence in a criminal proceeding or in a juvenile court proceeding
9 other than a child in need of assistance proceeding under Title 3, Subtitle 8 of the Courts
10 Article to prove the truth of the matter asserted in the statement:

11 (i) if the statement is not admissible under any other hearsay
12 exception; and

13 (ii) if the child victim OR WITNESS testifies.

14 (2) (i) In a child in need of assistance proceeding in the juvenile court
15 under Title 3, Subtitle 8 of the Courts Article, an out of court statement by a child victim
16 may come into evidence to prove the truth of the matter asserted in the statement:

17 1. if the statement is not admissible under any other hearsay
18 exception; and

19 2. regardless of whether the child victim testifies.

20 (ii) If the child victim does not testify, the child victim's out of court
21 statement will be admissible only if there is corroborative evidence that the alleged offender
22 had the opportunity to commit the alleged abuse or neglect.

23 (3) To provide the defendant, child respondent, or alleged offender with an
24 opportunity to prepare a response to the statement, the prosecuting attorney shall serve on
25 the defendant, child respondent, or alleged offender and the attorney for the defendant,
26 child respondent, or alleged offender within a reasonable time before the juvenile court
27 proceeding and at least 20 days before the criminal proceeding in which the statement is to
28 be offered into evidence, notice of:

29 (i) the State's intention to introduce the statement;

30 (ii) any audio or visual recording of the statement; and

31 (iii) if an audio or visual recording of the statement is not available,
32 the content of the statement.

1 (4) (i) The defendant, child respondent, or alleged offender may depose
2 a witness who will testify under this section.

3 (ii) Unless the State and the defendant, child respondent, or alleged
4 offender agree or the court orders otherwise, the defendant, child respondent, or alleged
5 offender shall file a notice of deposition:

6 1. in a criminal proceeding, at least 5 days before the date of
7 the deposition; or

8 2. in a juvenile court proceeding, within a reasonable time
9 before the date of the deposition.

10 (iii) Except where inconsistent with this paragraph, Maryland Rule
11 4–261 applies to a deposition taken under this paragraph.

12 (e) (1) A child victim's OR WITNESS'S out of court statement is admissible
13 under this section only if the statement has particularized guarantees of trustworthiness.

14 (2) To determine whether the statement has particularized guarantees of
15 trustworthiness under this section, the court shall consider, but is not limited to, the
16 following factors:

17 (i) the child victim's OR WITNESS'S personal knowledge of the
18 event;

19 (ii) the certainty that the statement was made;

20 (iii) any apparent motive to fabricate or exhibit partiality by the child
21 victim OR WITNESS, including interest, bias, corruption, or coercion;

22 (iv) whether the statement was spontaneous or directly responsive to
23 questions;

24 (v) the timing of the statement;

25 (vi) whether the child victim's OR WITNESS'S young age makes it
26 unlikely that the child victim OR WITNESS fabricated the statement that represents a
27 graphic, detailed account beyond the child victim's OR WITNESS'S expected knowledge and
28 experience;

29 (vii) the appropriateness of the terminology of the statement to the
30 child victim's OR WITNESS'S age;

31 (viii) the nature and duration of the abuse or neglect;

1 (ix) the inner consistency and coherence of the statement;

2 (x) whether the child victim OR WITNESS was suffering pain or
3 distress when making the statement;

4 (xi) whether extrinsic evidence exists to show the defendant or child
5 respondent had an opportunity to commit the act complained of in the child victim's OR
6 WITNESS'S statement;

7 (xii) whether the statement was suggested by the use of leading
8 questions; and

9 (xiii) the credibility of the person testifying about the statement.

10 (f) In a hearing outside of the presence of the jury or before the juvenile court
11 proceeding, the court shall:

12 (1) make a finding on the record as to the specific guarantees of
13 trustworthiness that are in the statement; and

14 (2) determine the admissibility of the statement.

15 (g) (1) In making a determination under subsection (f) of this section, the court
16 shall examine the child victim OR WITNESS in a proceeding in the judge's chambers, the
17 courtroom, or another suitable location that the public may not attend unless:

18 (i) the child victim OR WITNESS:

19 1. is deceased; or

20 2. is absent from the jurisdiction for good cause shown or the
21 State has been unable to procure the child victim's OR WITNESS'S presence by subpoena
22 or other reasonable means; or

23 (ii) the court determines that an audio or visual recording of the
24 child victim's OR WITNESS'S statement makes an examination of the child victim OR
25 WITNESS unnecessary.

26 (2) Except as provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection, any defendant
27 or child respondent, attorney for a defendant or child respondent, and the prosecuting
28 attorney may be present when the court hears testimony on whether to admit into evidence
29 the out of court statement of a child victim OR WITNESS under this section.

30 (3) When the court examines the child victim OR WITNESS as paragraph
31 (1) of this subsection requires:

1 (i) one attorney for each defendant or child respondent, one attorney
2 for the child victim OR WITNESS, and one prosecuting attorney may be present at the
3 examination; and

4 (ii) the court may not allow a defendant or child respondent to be
5 present at the examination.

6 (h) (1) This section does not limit the admissibility of a statement under any
7 other applicable hearsay exception or rule of evidence.

8 (2) This section does not prohibit the court in a juvenile court proceeding
9 from hearing testimony in the judge’s chambers.

10 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
11 October 1, 2022.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.