



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 683 & Senate Bill 684
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The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is a non-profit membership organization that includes the State's seventeen rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI) which provides direct legal services for survivors across Maryland. We urge the Judicial Proceedings Committee to report favorably on Senate Bills 683 and 684

Senate Bill 683 – Pre-Release Services for Women
Senate Bill 684 – Pre-Release Facility for Women

These bills mandate pre-release services for women inmates and creation of a pre-release facility for women inmates.

86 percent of women who have spent time in jail report that they had been sexually assaulted at some point in their lives. While women represented just 13 percent of the US jail population between 2009 and 2011, they represented 67 percent of the victims of staff-on-inmate sexual victimization. (*Overlooked: Women and Jails in an Era of Reform*, Vera Institute, 2016) Within our State, 12.7% of inmates at the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women reported being sexually victimized by a fellow inmate or staff member. (Allen J. Becket al, "Sexual Victimization in Prisons and Jails Reported by Inmates, 2011–12", Bureau of Justice Statistics, May 2013.) Sexual violence is so pronounced among jailed and incarcerated women that Sen. Cory Booker, (D-NJ,) has labeled the overarching phenomenon as "a survivor-of-sexual-trauma to prisoner pipeline."

It is critical that women have access to services prior to release from incarceration. Pre-release services will include connecting sexual assault survivors with local rape crisis centers and other vital support. This can include therapy, support groups, and information about recovering from sexual violence.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judicial Proceedings Committee to
report favorably on Senate Bill 683 and Senate Bill 684**