



House Judiciary Committee

House Bill 974 Civil Actions – Child Sexual Abuse – Statute of
Limitations

**** SUPPORT ****

February 20, 2020

On behalf of Maryland Children's Alliance and our 23 local children's advocacy centers and multi-disciplinary teams working to protect over 5,000 Maryland child victims of maltreatment, I want to thank you for your passion and work to help children who have been victimized.

Maryland Children's Alliance supports House Bill 974- Repeal of the Child Sexual Abuse Civil Statute of Limitations (SOL). We believe in the urgent need to repeal the statute of limitations so that victims can come forward when they are ready and able.

There is no limit to how long a victim of sexual abuse is affected by their trauma. Therefore, the victim's opportunity to report and seek civil legal redress should not be limited. Maryland Children's Alliance supports this bill because we know that many children do not report sexual abuse and other maltreatment until they are well into their adult years. This repeal will allow those victims to decide when it is best for them to report and have confidence that the legal system will not shut them out because of a statute of limitation.

We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB974. Maryland Children's Alliance is committed to ensuring that a child, anywhere in Maryland, has access to trauma-informed, evidenced-based care through a children's advocacy center. Within our centers, each child and youth victim are surrounded by a circle of care through the multidisciplinary team approach used by children's advocacy centers.

Maryland Children's Alliance, Inc. (MCA), is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)(3) founded in 2003 to promote the well-being of children by encouraging and supporting the development, growth and continuation of accredited children's advocacy centers (CACs) throughout Maryland with continuous technical assistance, training and public awareness. Our 23-member agencies are located across the State of Maryland in urban, suburban and rural jurisdictions serving over 5,000 children in 2019. Maryland Children's Alliance is a member of and operates in accordance with nationally recognized evidence-based standards of the National Children's Alliance.

Thank you for your consideration of this written testimony in support of House Bill 974.

Sincerely,

Susan B. Hansell
State Chapter Director
Maryland Children's Alliance