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Ways and Means Committee

Education Subcommittee

Finance Resources Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Support HB1294**  
**Criminal Procedure – Victims of Crime – Private Room**

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I ask for your consideration and favorable report on HB1294 to require law enforcement agencies to provide a private room upon request for those reporting crimes under Title 3 of the Criminal Law Article and to post signage to that effect.

Best practices for sexual assault investigations include ensuring the privacy of victims and providing trauma informed support to victims of sexual assault from the first encounter with law enforcement throughout the investigation and prosecution of the offense. This not only encourages reporting of seriously under-reported offenses and reduces re-victimization but also aids in the successful prosecution of the case.

HB 1294 was born of constituent concerns after a police precinct in my County required an adolescent girl to describe the nature of her sexual assault (including demonstrating where on her body that she had been touched) in the public lobby and through a security window while others looked on. Obviously this incidence was traumatic and inappropriate. Assuming that this was an isolated event, I contacted County and State law enforcement agencies and requested copies of sexual assault reporting procedures only to discover that there are few in writing. Of the counties that responded to my request for information which included Prince Georges, Anne Arundel, Baltimore County and Howard Counties none of them have a policy requiring a private room for reporting sensitive issues like sexual assault. Some Counties responded that if someone requested privacy they would be willing to accommodate them if a room was available but that they do not actively offer this option.

In response to the lack of guidance on best practices throughout the state, I introduce HB1294 which requires signage that a private room is available to anyone reporting crimes of a sensitive nature and requires that law enforcement agencies honor such a request.

I ask for a favorable report on HB1294 to protect victims of sexual assault from further traumatization and privacy concerns.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michele Guyton", written in a cursive style.