



**Working to end sexual violence in Maryland**

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**Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 767 with Amendments**  
**Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel**  
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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), a statewide legal services provider for survivors of sexual assault. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all of its members working to eliminate sexual violence. We urge the Judicial Proceedings Committee to report favorably on Senate Bill 767 with Amendments.

**Senate Bill 767 – Human Trafficking – Vacatur and Expungement**

This bill improves the current law permitting survivors of sex trafficking to vacate convictions when the underlying act was directly caused by the trafficking. Specifically, it directs the court to dismiss the underlying charge and to inform the victim of trafficking of their right to seek expungement of the charge. This is an important technical change that will help support a survivor's ability to recover and move on with their lives without the challenges caused by having a criminal record.

SB767 also proposes automatic sealing of records and closed court proceedings. MCASA fully appreciates that there are cases when sealed records and closed courtrooms are appropriate and necessary to protect the survivor from violent traffickers. We respectfully oppose automatic sealing and closure, however, because this would deprive court-watchers and other advocates from the ability to monitor the proceedings and the judges presiding over proceedings. Automatic closure may have the unintended consequence of shielding poor treatment of survivors, particularly self-represented survivors. We suggest that SB767 be amended to shield records and close courtrooms only upon request of the movant or State's Attorney Office:

Inserting on page 4, in line 27, following (H) “ UPON REQUEST OF A MOVANT OR THE STATE'S ATTORNEY:”

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the  
Judicial Proceedings Committee to  
report favorably on Senate Bill 767 with Amendments**