



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 477
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. MCASA urges the Appropriations Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 477.

House Bill 477 – Reproductive Health Services – Higher Education Students

This bill requires higher education institutions to develop and implement a reproductive health services plan to ensure students have access to a comprehensive range of reproductive health services, including abortion care. The institution would be required to consult with students to develop this plan.

1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men are sexually assaulted during college.¹

Access to abortion care and reproductive health services are vital to survivors of rape.

The CDC reports that almost 3 million women in the U.S. experienced Rape-Related Pregnancy (RRP) during their lifetime. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/understanding-RRP-inUS.html>

A three year longitudinal study of rape-related pregnancy in the U.S., published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology (1996, vol. 175, pp. 320-325), found:

5% of rape victims of reproductive age (age 12-45) became pregnant as a result of rape, with the majority of pregnancies in adolescents. Of these, half terminated the pregnancy, 5.9% placed the child for adoption, and 32.2% kept the child.

Reproductive health services, including abortion care, are important for students for many reasons, including to support students who have been sexually assaulted.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Appropriations Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 477**

¹ MARYLAND OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, DOING MORE: REDUCING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AT MARYLAND'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE REPORT, 3 (2014).