



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 129
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 Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 129.

While protective orders are often thought of as tools to end domestic violence, survivors of sexual violence and child abuse, including child sexual abuse, can also receive protection orders to help increase safety. Every final protective order requires the respondent to surrender their firearms to law enforcement. Advocates working with survivors have long been concerned that respondents are not surrendering all of their firearms. The gun surrender process is handled at the local level and there are no uniform protocols across Maryland's many law enforcement agencies for tracking the surrender of firearms.

House Bill 3 would require each law enforcement agency to report to the Maryland State Police Gun Center information about firearms surrendered pursuant to a final protective order. This will help Maryland determine whether our current system of protective order gun surrendering is effective. If enacted, this bill will give us data about whether Maryland is doing a good job getting firearms out of the hands of abusers.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judiciary Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 129**