



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 691
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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 Health & Government Operations and Judiciary Committees to report favorably on House Bill 691.

House Bill 691 – Gender Affirming Care

The goal of this bill is to enhance protections for the transgender community as well as their healthcare providers by removing obstacles to the safe provision of necessary healthcare and shielding them from the threat of legal prosecution and/or unjust professional sanction.

This bill follows on the tremendous work done last year by the Maryland General Assembly to shield reproductive health care patients and providers through the Reproductive Health Protection Act, and seeks to expand the definition of “legally-protected care” in the Maryland code set forth by that bill, to include gender-affirming care. Doing so would have the effect of extending the umbrella of protections now enjoyed by reproductive health patients and providers to the transgender community as well. This bill would also serve to codify and enhance the protections established in Governor Moore’s Executive Order of June, 2023.

The transgender community experiences disproportionately high rates of sexual violence. An estimated 47% of transgender people are sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime. (National Center for Transgender Equality, “The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey Executive Summary,” December 2016). MCASA encourages this Committee to report favorably on HB691 as part of a larger effort to increase safety and support for all survivors.

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Health & Government Operations and Judiciary Committees to
report favorably on House Bill 691**