



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 202
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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 202.

Senate Bill 202 – Statewide DNA Database System – Fixing Bureaucratic Obstacles

This bill corrects language in the current statute and makes changes to help the state DNA database work effectively. Current law provides for collecting DNA evidence from people arrested for crimes of violence or burglary, including from people involved in sexual crimes. Unfortunately, incorrect language and process problems have created barriers to implementation of the law. SB206 fixes these issues and would allow the law to work as intended.

Collection of DNA evidence is of particular importance to survivors of rape and other sexual assault crimes. Rape survivors voluntarily submit to extensive, intrusive evidence collection in the hopes of stopping a sex offender and obtaining justice. It is vital that the state database have information available to compare with the evidence collected from survivors' bodies. Maryland currently has a backlog of over 16,000 DNA samples waiting to be uploaded into the state database. Among that group of samples, there is undoubtedly evidence that will help solve sexual assault cases. Senate Bill 206 does not create a new investigatory tool or burden on arrestees. It merely makes the current law effective.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judicial Proceeding Committee to
report favorably on Senate Bill 202**