



Continuing the Missions of the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation, Inc.

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February 3, 2026

Re: Favorable to SB 294

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. (MCVRC), I respectfully submit this letter in strong support of Senate Bill 294. MCVRC provides legal representation and advocacy to crime victims throughout Maryland and works daily with survivors of sexual assault and stalking who must navigate the criminal justice system while attempting to rebuild their lives.

Senate Bill 294 takes an important and necessary step to protect victims from further harm by limiting the disclosure of identifying information contained in court filings and records. For survivors of sexual assault and stalking, the public release of names or other identifying details can retraumatize victims, compromise their safety, and deter them from participating fully in the justice process. These harms are not hypothetical. They are real, ongoing, and frequently raised by the clients we serve.

This legislation appropriately recognizes that privacy is a critical component of victim safety. Maryland courts already follow similar procedures to protect the identifying information of minor victims, acknowledging their heightened vulnerability and the long-term consequences of public exposure. Senate Bill 294 simply extends these well-established and effective protections to all victims of sexual assault and stalking, who face comparable risks of retaliation, harassment, and ongoing trauma. By requiring courts and parties to redact identifying information before allowing inspection of filings by nonparties, and by permitting victims to request redaction of existing records, SB 294 balances transparency with the legitimate need to protect vulnerable victims from

unnecessary harm. Importantly, the bill preserves judicial discretion through a clear and convincing good cause standard, ensuring that due process and fairness remain intact.

Survivors of sexual assault and stalking already face significant barriers to reporting and pursuing accountability. Fear of public identification, retaliation, or continued harassment too often silences victims. Senate Bill 294 helps remove one of those barriers by affirming that the justice system will not unnecessarily expose victims to additional risk or humiliation simply because they seek help.

MCVRC strongly supports Senate Bill 294 and urges the Committee to issue a favorable report. Protecting a victim's identity is not a procedural technicality. It is a fundamental aspect of justice, dignity, and safety.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued attention to the needs of crime victims across Maryland.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joanna D. Mupanduki".

Joanna D. Mupanduki, Esq.
Deputy Director
Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center, Inc.