

SB 0294 Criminal Procedure - Protection of Identit

Uploaded by: Catherine OMalley

Position: FAV

BILL NO:	Senate Bill 0294
TITLE:	Criminal Procedure - Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking
COMMITTEE:	Judicial Proceedings
HEARING DATE:	February 5, 2026
POSITION:	SUPPORT

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is dedicated to ensuring the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women throughout the state. We fully support any and all measures aimed at addressing the needs of survivors of rape and sexual assault and as such urge a favorable support for Senate Bill 0294.

Rape is on the rise in Maryland. FBI data gathered by the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) found over a 15% increase in reporting from 2021 to 2022. One out of every four Maryland women — about 664,454 — has been the victim of rape sometime in her lifetime, and half — about 1,180,150 — as well as more than one third of Maryland's men— about 722,571—have experienced other forms of sexual violence. According to the National Institute of Justice, approximately 68% of women in abusive relationships are also sexually assaulted during the course of the relationship.

SB 0294 extends privacy protections for minor victims of sexual assault to alleged victims of any age, including the right to have their identifying information redacted from an existing filing. The Women's Law Center strongly supports this bill in order to protect survivors from further re-victimization that often occurs when they lose control of their very personal and painful story or when members of their community or the public at large blame, question, disbelieve or harass them. Victims often feel trapped between wanting the abuse to stop and being terrified of other people learning what has been done to them and being held somehow responsible for their own assault. That fear can keep victims silent while the abuse is going on, and for years after it has stopped.

We live in a culture where most sexual violence goes unpunished and is in fact normalized and excused in our media and popular culture. This is perpetuated through the use of misogynistic language – often by our highest ranking elected officials and most popular celebrities – the objectification of women's bodies, the glamorization of asymmetrical power dynamics and trivialization of assault as an eventuality of constructed gender norms. Our society demonizes victims, who are most often women and girls, who also face systemic bias and are disadvantaged by their gender as their credibility is often called into doubt and they are held responsible not just for their own behaviors, but for those of their attackers.

If not protected, sexual assault survivors are often excoriated in the press, or more often “doxed” by having their private information released online as “revenge” by their attacker or their abuser's supporters. The exposure of victims and alleged victims' personal details on the internet is another form of assault, and one that has tangible impacts on survivors' physical safety, health, career, family members, etc.

We must do everything we can to end sexual assault in Maryland. In order to do so, we must create a safe environment for reporting in which victims – and alleged victims – do not risk losing everything by exposing these crimes against them. For the above reasons, the Women's Law Center of Maryland strongly urges a favorable report for SB 0294.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a non-profit legal services organization whose mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland. Our mission is advanced through direct legal services, information and referral hotlines, and statewide advocacy.

SB0294 Criminal Procedure – Protection of Identity

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0294 – Criminal Procedure – Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking – FAVORABLE

Bill Sponsor: Senator Love

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Jessica Gorski, Executive Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Gorski, and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0294 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations representing more than 30,000 Marylanders across every legislative district. Our mission is simple: to promote laws that protect people, strengthen public safety, and ensure dignity and justice for all Marylanders.

SB0294 is a necessary and commonsense step to protect survivors of sexual assault and stalking from further harm.

This bill ensures that a victim's identifying information is not disclosed during criminal proceedings without their consent, balancing privacy with transparency. For survivors, privacy is not a technical issue—it is a matter of safety. Public disclosure can expose victims to retaliation, harassment, and ongoing trauma, especially when perpetrators remain a threat or when survivors fear damage to their personal, professional, or family lives.

Too often, the fear of being publicly identified erodes trust, preventing survivors from reporting crimes or participating fully in the justice process. SB0294 removes that barrier. By establishing clear and enforceable confidentiality standards, this bill builds confidence, making it safer for survivors to come forward, cooperate with investigations, and seek accountability.

When survivors feel protected, **communities are safer**. Crimes are more likely to be reported, and perpetrators are more likely to be held accountable. Trust in the justice system is strengthened, fostering a shared sense of safety and responsibility.

SB0294 also reflects a trauma-informed approach to public safety. Survivors of sexual assault and stalking—particularly women, LGBTQ+ Marylanders, and members of marginalized communities—are disproportionately targeted and often face additional risks when their identities are exposed. Protecting their privacy affirms Maryland’s commitment to fairness, respect, and human dignity for all.

This legislation aligns directly with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. It advances public safety, supports social justice, and recognizes that healing and accountability depend on a system that does not retraumatize those who have already endured significant harm.

Protecting survivors’ identities is not about secrecy but about safeguarding their rights within the legal process. SB0294 ensures that confidentiality measures are implemented with safeguards that uphold due process, reflecting the values of safety, justice, and respect in Maryland’s legal system.

I appreciate your consideration. We respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE report on SB0294**.

WDC testimony obo SB 0294 draft2.docx (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Deborah Williams

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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www.womensdemocraticclub.org

**Senate Bill 0294 – Criminal Procedure – Protection of Identity of Victim
of Sexual Assault or Stalking**

**Judicial Proceeding Committee – February 5, 2026
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of SB 0294. This bill will expand protection of victims/survivors of sexual assault or stalking by automatically redacting their names and identifying information from court documents and shielding their identities in court records, thus making it easier and safer to report these crimes. Many times, victims are not aware that they can ask for their names to be shielded from public view. This bill will make that protection automatic and easy.

Of all adult women residing in Maryland, 19%, or about 457,000 adult women, have experienced some form of completed or attempted rape in their lifetime. About 44%, or 1,058,000 of Maryland's women, and more than 23% of Maryland's men, about 520,800, have experienced other forms of sexual violence (Bureau of Justice Statistics, Crime Victimization Survey, 1992-2015).

As an example, a few barriers to reporting rape incidents to law enforcement include not wanting others to know about the rape and fear of retaliation from the offender (Tapp, S. N. & Coen, E. J. (2025). "Criminal Victimization, 2024." U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved November 26, 2025, from <https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/cv24.pdf>).

In this age of social media, stalking is done in person as well as online. Fear of identity reveal is a major deterrent to filing charges, as personal information would be available to those who may blame, question, disbelieve or harass survivors. Protecting privacy can help remove this barrier to these crimes being reported.

In 2024, SB 111 was passed which protects the identity of minor victims, including those who have suffered sexual assault. This bill would add adult survivors, making identity protection available and automatic for all Marylanders who have been victims of sexual assault and stalking. The passing of this bill will empower survivors to come forward to report these crimes, thus helping to remove predators from Maryland streets before more harm is done to the survivors and to future victims.

We ask for your support for SB 0294 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Cynthia Rubenstein
WDC President

Deborah Williams
WDC The Basics Committee

Kate Stein
WDC Advocacy Chair

SB294-Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual A

Uploaded by: Jessica Morgan

Position: FAV



Bill No: SB294
Title: Criminal Procedure - Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking
Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Hearing: February 5, 2026
Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women's groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW's purpose is to advocate for legislation affecting women and families. To accomplish this goal, MLAW creates an annual legislative agenda with issues voted on by MLAW members and endorsed by organizations and individuals from all over Maryland. [SB294 - Criminal Procedure - Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking](#) is a priority on the [2026 Legislative Agenda](#) and we urge your support.

SB294 - Criminal Procedure - Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking protects identifying information of a victim of sexual assault or stalking from appearing in public court documents.

In 2024 the Maryland General Assembly passed SB 111 to protect the identities of Minor Victims. However, this showed there is still a gap in privacy protections for adults, particularly those who are victims of sexual assault or stalking. Survivor's names can easily be accessed and found in public court documents. Victims should not have their names printed with the details of their assault on public documents. This lack of respect for a person's privacy can be a barrier to somebody even reporting these types of crimes because now their personal trauma is going to be out there for anybody to see or exploit. Offenders have even used these court records to locate survivors, particularly in stalking cases.

This bill will require the Judiciary redact and shield victims names and their identifying information in court documents automatically, without a special request or any extra red tape that puts an extra burden on the victim. This will preserve the dignity of the survivor and remove a reason why people do not come forward and report these types of crimes.

For these reasons, MLAW strongly urges the passage of SB294.

MLAW 2026 Supporting Organizations

The following organizations have signed on in support of our 2026 Legislative Agenda*:

AAUW Anne Arundel County
AAUW Kensington-Rockville Branch
AAUW Maryland
AAUW Garrett Branch
American Association of University Women Howard County Branch
Baltimore County Commission for Women
Bound for Better, advocates for Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse
Campaign for Eneshal Galloway at Large Candidacy
Carroll County Chapter NOW
Crabs On The Shore
Jack and Jill of America Western Maryland Chapter
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA)
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV)
Maryland NOW
Montgomery County Business and Professional Women
Montgomery County Commission for Women
Montgomery County Chapter, National Organization for Women
National Association of University Women, Prince George's County
NAUW
Postpartum Support International, Maryland
Prince George's County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.
Self-Reflections: Social-Emotional, Behavioral and Advocacy Services, LLC
Stella's Girls, Incorporated
SUB&S LLC
The Heart Nest
The Rest Of A Life (TROAL)
Top Ladies of Distinction, Incorporated, Patuxent River Chapter
Unrooted Culture
Women's Commission for Baltimore City
Women's Equity Center and Action Network
Women's Law Center of Maryland
Zonta Club of Annapolis

**As of 2/2/2026*

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women
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Support for SB 294.pdf

Uploaded by: Joanna Mupanduki

Position: FAV



Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.

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

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🌐 mdcrimevictims.org

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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

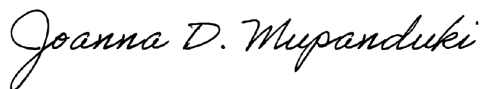
unnecessary harm. Importantly, the bill preserves judicial discretion through a clear and convincing good cause standard, ensuring that due process and fairness remain intact.

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.

SB 294 - MNADV - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Laure Ruth

Position: FAV



BILL NO: Senate Bill 294
TITLE: **Criminal Procedure – Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking**
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
HEARING DATE: February 10, 2026
POSITION: **FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that works to lead diverse community partners toward the common purpose of reducing the occurrence and impact of intimate partner violence. **MNADV urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 294.**

While Maryland law provides some protections for minor victims, adult victims of stalking and sexual assault easily find their sensitive information exposed in public court records or shared during the discovery process. SB 294 addresses this by mandating the redaction of identifying information from court filings and records. This bill would expand protection for the identities of victim/survivors in criminal and juvenile cases to include adult victims/survivors of sexual assault. The bill would also create a process for victim/survivors to request redaction of information in previously filed cases.

Senate Bill 294 provides a simple yet powerful solution: ensuring that the names of sexual assault survivors are automatically redacted from public court records, just as other states have done to protect victims of violent crimes. Survivors should not have to petition the courts to shield their own identities—this protection should be granted as a matter of principle and policy.

One of the most powerful aspects of SB 294 is that it allows victims to protect themselves even in cases that have already begun or concluded. Upon a written request from a victim of stalking or sexual assault, the court is mandated to redact their identifying information from existing filings or records. This is crucial for survivors who may have had their information exposed in past litigation and are concerned about the long-term digital footprint that a stalker could exploit.

This legislation does not restrict any party to the case from having access to necessary information.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on SB 294.**

For further information contact Laure Ruth ■ Public Policy Director ■ 301-852-3930 ■ lruth@mnadv.org

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Tel: 301-429-3601 ■ E-mail: info@mnadv.org ■ Website: www.mnadv.org

Name and ID for all SA survivors - 2026 - MCASA SB

Uploaded by: Lisae C Jordan

Position: FAV



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Silver Spring, MD 20907
Phone: 301-565-2277
Fax: 301-565-3619

For more information contact:
Lisae C. Jordan, Esquire
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Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 294
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
February 5, 2026

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 294.

Senate Bill 294 – Protection of Identity of Victims of Sexual Assault and Stalking

This bill would expand protection for the identities of victim/survivors in criminal and juvenile cases to include adult victims/survivors of sexual assault and stalking. The bill would also create a process for victim/survivors to request redaction of information in previously filed cases.

Privacy is vital for survivors of sexual violence.

Survivors have different reactions and experiences of sexual assault, but one common thread is the desire to control information about what happened to them. Laws, professional ethics, and agency values all support protection for victim/survivor privacy. These range from provisions of the Violence Against Women Act (34 U.S.C. §1229(b)(2); see also, VOCA 34 U.S.C. §20103 et seq.) to ethical rules applying to mental health professionals (*e.g.* NASW Code of Ethics, 1.07) to the mission of rape crisis centers (*see, e.g.*, MCASA Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program Standards). People and agencies who work with survivors fiercely protect privacy and insist that a survivor should be the one to decide when their identity is shared.

Court filings can create a gaping hole in privacy protections for survivors. Crim.Law §3-317 requires the name of a survivor in charging documents and survivor information can appear in a variety of places in court files. The advent of the internet and easy access to court filings has made what was previously an obscure document buried in file rooms easy to obtain. Some jurisdictions have already adopted internal practices to protect privacy, such as using initials, but this is inconsistent across the State. In 2024, the General Assembly enacted legislation protecting identifying information for minors, including for minor victims of sex crimes.

Suggested Friendly Amendment: MCASA strongly supports HB294 and its goals. MCASA is aware of the concerns raised by the Department of Health, however, we object to disclosing survivors' names to the Boards without their explicit permission. Additionally, we express concerns about unnecessary sealing of records that should be open to the public. It is important to shine light on the issue of sexual assault. Privacy should not create secrecy.

Should the Committee wish to clarify this issue, we respectfully suggest that the Court be required to redact when possible and that denying access to the files all together be subject to the existing motion to seal process. This may be as straightforward as substituting "UNTIL" for "UNLESS" on page 2, line 29, and adding a requirement that "REDACTION OF IDENTIFYING INFORMATION SHALL OCCUR WITHIN 10 DAYS OF A REQUEST FOR DISCLOSURE OR INSPECTION OF A RECORD."

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judicial Proceedings Committee to
report favorably on Senate Bill 294**

SB0294 February 5, 2026, identity protection.pdf

Uploaded by: Lynn Mortoro

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0294

Criminal Procedure – Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking

FAVORABLE

TO: Chair William C. Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Jeff Waldstriecher and members of the of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Lynn Mortoro, member of the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN)

DATE: February 5, 2026

Dear Chair Senator Smith, Vice Chair Senator Waldstriecher and all members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to testify for this bill.

I have always believed in the rights of victims to their privacy, especially those who have been assaulted either physically or emotionally. It is vital that they are able to feel safe. The records must be kept private so that the person who has been assaulted does not have to worry about further encounters with the assailant.

I am a member of the Episcopal Church. The Church has longstanding resolutions and statements about these matters.

The Church supports governmental actions that protect the rights of victims of violent acts and urge all Episcopalians to strive for justice and healing through prayer, advocacy, care, and action.

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) requests a

FAVORABLE report

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) is a ministry of The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, The Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and The Delaware-Maryland Synod ELCA

SB294

Uploaded by: Mai Lin Petrine

Position: FAV



February 5, 2025

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
East Miller Senate Building, Room 2
11 Bladen St. Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Comment in Opposition of Senate Bill 294 – Protection of Identity of Victims of Sexual Assault or Stalking

Dear Chair William C. Smith, Jr. and the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

The Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB®) is a not-for-profit organization with membership comprised of 47 massage therapy licensing boards and agencies in the United States and its territories. Our mission is to support our member boards in their work to ensure that the practice of massage therapy is provided to the public safely and competently. We do this by promoting and supporting public protection and regulatory excellence by providing education, best practices, and sharing the collective wisdom of massage therapy regulators from across the country. **The Maryland Board of Massage Therapy Examiners (Board) is a member of the FSMTB.**

Protecting victim identities in cases of sexual assault and stalking is an important goal that should be explored and pursued. While FSMTB supports the goal of this legislation, we urge the legislature to collaborate with the Board. As currently drafted, **it will create complications for the Board in that the Board already has guidelines in place to protect victim identities, and these provisions will work against their investigations.**

The Board unfortunately receives numerous complaints involving allegations of sexual misconduct by licensed massage professionals against clients. Senate Bill 294 as written, limits the Board's ability to access identifying information of adult victims from courts and law enforcement. **This limitation would hinder the Board's ability to effectively investigate, collect evidence, and prosecute cases against its licensees, inadvertently denying victims access to justice.**

While FSMTB wholeheartedly endorses the goal behind this legislation, we strongly advise the legislature **to consult and collaborate with the Board of Massage Therapy Examiners to ensure the language in this bill suits all stakeholders and does not have unintended consequences** that inhibit the Board's ability to conduct disciplinary and enforcement actions against licensees who violate the Massage Practice Act and otherwise engage in unprofessional (and in some cases, criminal) conduct.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments. Should you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact the undersigned at mlpetrine@fsmtb.org or 913-681-0380.

Sincerely,

Mai Lin Petrine, JD
Director of Legal and Regulatory Affairs

SB294_OSPfavorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Setzer

Position: FAV

STATE OF MARYLAND

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State Prosecutor

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SUPPORT FOR SB 294

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

We are writing to express the support of the Office of the State Prosecutor for Senate Bill 294. The Office of the State Prosecutor is tasked with enforcing political corruption and police misconduct cases throughout Maryland and believes that this legislation will help protect victims of sexual assault and make them feel supported in reporting the crimes against them.

The Office of the State Prosecutor

The Office of the State Prosecutor is an independent agency within the Executive Branch of government. The Office is tasked with ensuring the honesty and integrity of State government and elections by conducting thorough, independent investigations and, when appropriate, prosecutions of criminal conduct affecting the integrity of our State and local government institutions, officials, employees, and elections.

SB 294 –Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking

The Office of the State Prosecutor recently created a unit to address Official Misconduct involving special victims. We now have a specialized prosecutor and investigator to handle the complexities of prosecuting cases involving people using their positions to exploit victims. Over the years, our office has seen that one of the primary concerns of victims is the publicity that the victim endures after reporting a crime against a public official. This legislation will help prevent victims of sexual assault of any age from having their name in public filings and limit the inevitable scrutiny that comes with making these types of accusations against people in positions of trust.

Our Office has been following the federal practice of anonymizing crime victims for years; however, not all jurisdictions are familiar with the practice, and we have had victims become extremely concerned about the possibility of undue publicity related to their allegations. While we cannot comment on specific investigations, we have had many cases we could not charge criminally because of how concerned the victim was with the public nature of the trial process.

This legislation helps ensure that all victims can pursue justice with anonymity if they have experienced sexual violence by creating a safe environment for reporting the conduct they have suffered at the hands of a public official. We believe this is important legislation to ensure justice for victims throughout the State and prevent further harm to them.

We encourage this Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 294.

Sincerely,

CHARLTON T. HOWARD, III
STATE PROSECUTOR

Testimony in support of SB0294 - Protection of Ide

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0294_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
02/05/2026
Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703-7134

TESTIMONY ON SB#0294 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Criminal Procedure – Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0294, **Criminal Procedure – Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking**

This bill makes Maryland’s policy for victims of sexual assault or stalking a humane and ethical choice for protection of their identity.

The Office for Victims of Crime, United States Department of Justice, says that ¹

Stalking is a crime of power and control. It is a course of action directed at an individual that causes the victim to fear for their safety, and generally involves repeated visual or physical proximity, nonconsensual communication, and verbal, written, or implied threats.

[Research shows](#) that victims of stalking are more likely to experience anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression compared to the general population.

The Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect and the the National Sexual Violence Resource Center and MaleSurvivor discussed normal behaviors that are common for survivors of sexual abuse: ²

Victim privacy is a basic need. The identity of sexual abuse victims should be protected.

Keeping victim names private protects victims from further re-victimization that can occur when they lose control of their very personal and painful story or when members of their community or the public at large blame, question, disbelieve or harass them.

This bill will acknowledge these harms that can occur and put a stop to them in Maryland by prohibiting a court or a party in a criminal or juvenile delinquency case from disclosing or allowing inspection of a certain court filing or record to a nonparty unless the court or the party redacts certain identifying information relating to a certain victim of sexual assault or victim of stalking that appears in the filing or record, subject to a certain exception; etc.

These protections are long overdue and should be made part of Maryland law as soon as possible.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0294.

¹ <https://ovc.ojp.gov/topics/stalking>

² <https://pcar.org/blog/common-victim-behaviors-survivors-sexual-abuse>

SB 294 - SA ^0 Privacy wttm -- Love.pdf

Uploaded by: Sara Love

Position: FAV

SARA N. LOVE
Legislative District 16
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Judicial Proceedings Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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SB 294 – Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, colleagues on JPR:

In 2024 Senator Sydnor sponsored, and the General Assembly passed, SB 111, protecting the identity of minors who were victims of crimes. SB 294 builds on that important privacy protection by protecting the identity of sexual assault and stalking victims, regardless of age.

Currently, the name of any adult victim of sexual assault or stalking named in a court case is easily accessible to the public. While several entities redact this information, it is still available, especially through public-facing kiosks in courthouses. SB 294 would require the names of sexual assault and stalking victims to be automatically redacted from public documents without forcing victims to go through the arduous legal process of petitioning the courts to protect their identity. It would still allow defendants and their attorneys to have access to this information, and would allow a court, upon a showing of clear and convincing evidence of good cause, to allow inspection of the documents with a victim's identifying information. The bill also allows victims of sexual assault and/or stalking to petition a court to order redaction of their own identifying information from existing filings or records, restoring to victims a modicum of control over their own lives.

As this Committee is aware, sexual assault is already vastly underreported, and the stigma surrounding these crimes often discourages victims from pressing charges. When faced with the additional threat of having their identity exposed during legal proceedings, survivors frequently opt not to pursue prosecution because they fear retaliation and harassment. We should be doing everything in our power to ensure that Maryland shields the identity of sexual assault survivors and ensure that they are not further victimized while trying to seek justice. Sexual assault and stalking victims lose some of the most fundamental aspects of our daily lives, including privacy, safety, autonomy, and the ability to move through the world without constant fear. SB 294 is important not only in protecting survivors, but also in recognizing that survivors should be the ones who decide whether and when their identity is shared.

For these reasons, I respectfully request your favorable report on SB 294.

MSAA Letter of Support With Amendment SB-294 - Cri

Uploaded by: Debbie Feinstein

Position: FWA

Ivan Bates
President



Kirsten N. Brown
Coordinator

Maryland State's Attorneys' Association
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kbrown@mdsaa.org ~ 301-748-1312

February 3, 2026

The Honorable Will Smith
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland State's Attorneys' Association (MSAA) supports (with amendments) Senate Bill 294—Criminal Procedure—Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking. I am the Chief of the Special Victims' Division for the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office, and co-chair, along with Deputy State's Attorney for Frederick County Joyce King, of the Maryland State's Attorney Association's Special Victims Legislative Committee. In my capacity as the Chief of SVD, I supervise and handle prosecutions related to sexual assault and stalking.

Senate Bill 294 expands the identity protections set forth in section 11-301 of the Criminal Procedure Article to include identity protection for victims/survivors of sexual assault and stalking. Currently, State's Attorney's Offices can file a motion to seal identity information *after* that information is in the public view (e.g., in a charging document or other court filing). This bill will offer greater protection by protecting this information as a matter of course. This bill does allow the Court to release this information for good cause; therefore, the bill does not set up an absolute bar to release.

In addition, the MSAA supports amending the current bill to distinguish between redacting identifying information and sealing the file in full. This clarification allows the public to view the substance of the charging or other public-facing document without learning the specific identifying information for the victim/survivor.

Senate Bill 294, with amendment, offers needed protection to victim/survivors of stalking and sexual assault. MSAA urges this Committee to issue a favorable report with amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debbie Feinstein", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Debbie Feinstein
Co-Chair, MSSA Special Victims Subcommittee

SB294 - JP - Acupuncture Bd - SWA.docx.pdf

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Position: FWA



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

Board of Acupuncture
Metro Executive Plaza
4201 Patterson Avenue, Third Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

2026 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 294
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
POSITION: Support With Amendment

TITLE: Criminal Procedure-Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking

BILL ANALYSIS: This bill would prohibit courts and certain third parties involved in criminal or juvenile delinquency proceedings from providing unredacted records identifying victims of sexual assault or stalking.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The State Board of Acupuncture (the “Board”) supports SB 294 with an amendment.

The Board is one of the health occupations regulatory boards established by the Maryland General Assembly and charged with protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Maryland. The Board fulfills its mission of protecting the public through: (1) shepherding practice law and regulation; (2) licensing qualified practitioners of acupuncture and East Asian medicine and (3) enforcement when violations of laws and regulations are proven after the completion of investigations. Such investigations include reports of inappropriate touching and sexual behaviors from patients and law enforcement.

The Board strongly supports the intent of the bill and acknowledges that the personal and contact information for victims of sexual assault and stalking must be safeguarded; and access to such information must be limited to ensure the integrity of law enforcement action, judicial proceedings as well as victim safety and quality of life overall. Board investigations follow the same guidelines and do not release victims’ information in our hearings or our public orders.

However, the current version of SB 294 impedes the Board’s ability to conduct a full and timely investigation of licensees who have potentially sexually assaulted or stalked patients. This unintended consequence ultimately can inhibit the Board’s ability to protect the public by making it impossible to gather sufficient information to make an informed decision about the misconduct of a licensee.

The Board of Acupuncture requests consideration of an amendment to SB 294 that allows the health occupations regulatory boards as State entities with investigative responsibilities and enforcement power to receive unredacted documents for purposes of performing their own investigation. The Board would also support a provision specifically prohibiting redisclosure, similar to the provision in the Confidentiality of Medical Records Act, Md. Code Ann., Health-Gen. § 4-301 *et seq.*, which allows the health regulatory boards access to confidential medical records for investigative purposes, but strictly prohibits the re-disclosure of those records without the consent of the patient.

For more information, please contact Tiffany Smith-Williams, Executive Director at 410-764-5925 or Tiffany.Smith-Williams@maryland.gov or Lillian Reese, the legislative liaison for the boards at 443-794-4757 or at lillian.reese@maryland.gov.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.

SB294 - JP - Massage Therapy Bd - SWA.docx.pdf

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Position: FWA



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

Maryland Board of Massage Therapy Examiners
4201 Patterson Avenue, Suite 301
Baltimore, MD 21215

2026 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 294
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
POSITION: Support With Amendment

TITLE: Criminal Procedure-Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking
BILL ANALYSIS: This bill would prohibit courts and certain third parties involved in criminal or juvenile delinquency proceedings from providing unredacted records identifying victims of sexual assault or stalking.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Maryland Board of Massage Therapy Examiners (the “Board”) supports SB 294 with amendment.

The Board is a health occupations regulatory board established by the Maryland General Assembly and charged with protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Maryland. The Board fulfills this mandate by licensing qualified massage therapy professionals and by investigating complaints received from the public and law enforcement alleging violations of the Board’s statutes and regulations, as well as applicable criminal laws. Unfortunately, the Board all too often receives reports from individuals regarding inappropriate sexual contact during the provision of a massage. Moreover, the Board occasionally receives reports from law enforcement regarding victims of a sexual assault by a licensee or registrant of the Board. In the latter example, the victim may not have been aware of the Board or its regulatory authority and therefore did not file a complaint directly with the Board. Regardless, the Board treats these cases with the utmost seriousness and urgency to uphold its mission to protect the public.

The Board strongly supports efforts to protect the privacy and identity of victims of sexual assault and stalking, particularly minors. Safeguarding vulnerable victims is a critical public policy goal, and the Board recognizes the importance of minimizing further harm to these individuals.

However, as currently drafted, SB 294 would significantly limit the Board’s access to identifying information regarding **adult victims** in cases involving licensed or registered massage therapy professionals. Such restrictions would impede the Board’s, as well as nearly two dozen other health occupations boards, ability to conduct thorough and timely investigations, including contacting potential witnesses and gathering necessary evidence. Without access to this

information, the Board's capacity to effectively investigate and administratively prosecute licensees and registrants who may pose a risk to the public would be compromised.

The Board does not seek public disclosure of victim identities. Rather, it requires limited, confidential access to identifying information solely for official investigatory and enforcement purposes, consistent with its statutory obligations and existing confidentiality protections. To be sure, victim information is never re-disclosed, and all identifying information regarding the victim is carefully shielded if the matter results in a final public order.

For all of these reasons, the Board of Massage Therapy Examiners supports SB 294 and respectfully requests an amendment to exempt the Board from the bill's restrictions and to allow the Board to continue to access this vital information solely for its regulatory investigations and enforcement actions. Such an amendment would preserve critical victim protection while ensuring that the Board can continue to fulfill its public safety mission. The Board would also be amenable to a provision specifically prohibiting redisclosure, similar to the provision in the Confidentiality of Medical Records Act, Md. Code Ann., Health-Gen. § 4-301 *et seq.*, which allows the health regulatory boards access to confidential medical records for investigative purposes, but strictly prohibits the re-disclosure of those records without the consent of the patient.

For more information, please contact Sharon J. Oliver, Executive Director at 410-764-5985 or Sharon.oliver@maryland.gov, or Lillian Reese, the legislative liaison for the boards at [443-794-4757](tel:443-794-4757) or at lillian.reese@maryland.gov.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.

SB 294 - JPR - BOP - LOSWA.docx.pdf

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Position: FWA



Board of Physicians

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Harbhajan Ajrawat, M.D., Chair

2026 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO.: Senate Bill 294
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
POSITION: Letter of Support with Amendment

TITLE: Criminal Procedure-Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking

BILL ANALYSIS: This bill would prohibit courts and certain third parties involved in criminal or juvenile delinquency proceedings from providing unredacted records identifying victims of sexual assault or stalking.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Maryland Board of Physicians (the “Board”) supports SB 294 with amendments.

The Board is a health occupations regulatory board established by the Maryland General Assembly and charged with protecting the health, safety, and welfare of Maryland's citizens. The Board fulfills this mandate by licensing qualified physicians and allied health professionals and by investigating complaints received from the public and law enforcement alleging violations of the Board’s statutes and regulations, as well as applicable criminal laws. Each health occupations board, under [Health Occupations, § 1-212](#), Annotated Code of Maryland, is required to implement sexual misconduct regulations and is authorized to deny a license or impose a sanction, including license revocation, if an applicant or licensee violates those regulations.

The Board strongly supports efforts to protect the privacy and identity of victims of sexual assault and stalking, particularly minors. Safeguarding vulnerable victims is a critical public policy goal, and the Board recognizes the importance of minimizing further harm to these individuals.

As currently drafted, SB 294 would prevent the Board’s access to identifying information in cases where a licensed physician or an allied health practitioner is the alleged perpetrator of a sexual crime. Without access to victim information, the Board could not effectively investigate and administratively prosecute a licensee who may pose a risk to the public.

Board investigations have strict confidentiality requirements in statute (See [Health Occupations, § 14-411](#), Annotated Code of Maryland), and the Board does not intend to publicly disclose any victim identities. The Board, however, does require limited, confidential access to identifying information solely for official investigatory and enforcement purposes, consistent with its statutory obligations and existing confidentiality protections. While the Board’s Disciplinary Orders are public, the names of patients, staff, facilities, etc., are not published in the public order.

The Board receives anywhere from 1 to 7 referrals from law enforcement each year in cases where there is a sexual misconduct victim. Law enforcement has referred cases to the Board where the burden of proof was not met for the criminal case, but the Board was still able to discipline the licensee because of the lower standard of proof required in licensing board cases. To properly investigate, the Board would need an unredacted copy of the law enforcement investigation to be able to interview the victim and other potential witnesses. In order to charge with a violation of the sexual misconduct regulations, the Board must prove a nexus between the physician, the sexual assault victim, and the practice of medicine.

For all of these reasons, the Board of Physicians respectfully requests an amendment to SB 294 (attached) to exempt the Board from the bill's restrictions, allowing the Board to continue to access this vital information solely for its regulatory investigations and enforcement actions. Such an amendment would preserve critical victim protection while ensuring that the Board can continue to fulfill its public safety mission.

Thank you for your consideration. For more information, please contact Madeline DelGreco, Manager of Policy and Legislation, at the Maryland Board of Physicians, at 410-764-5053

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Singh Ajrawat". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Harbhajan Ajrawat, M.D.
Chair, Maryland Board of Physicians

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Maryland Department of Health or the Administration.

Attachment - Suggested Amendment

AMENDMENT TO SB 294 -CRIMINAL PROCEDURE - PROTECTION OF IDENTITY OF VICTIM OF SEXUAL ASSAULT OR STALKING

Article - Criminal Procedure

11-301.

(3) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (5) OF THIS SECTION, NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER LAW, ON NOTICE THAT A CASE FILING OR RECORD INCLUDES IDENTIFYING INFORMATION OF A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ASSAULT OR A VICTIM OF STALKING, UNLESS THE COURT FINDS CLEAR AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT THERE IS GOOD CAUSE TO ORDER OTHERWISE, THE COURT OR A PARTY IN A CRIMINAL OR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY CASE MAY NOT DISCLOSE OR ALLOW INSPECTION OF AN ELECTRONIC OR PAPER COURT FILING OR RECORD, INCLUDING A CHARGING DOCUMENT, TO A NONPARTY TO THE CRIMINAL OR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY CASE, EXCEPT TO THE VICTIM OR THE VICTIM'S REPRESENTATIVE, UNLESS THE COURT OR THE PART DISCLOSING OR ALLOWING INSPECTION OF THE FILING OR RECORDS REDACTS ALL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION.

(4) ON WRITTEN REQUEST OF A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ASSAULT OR A VICTIM OF STALKING, THE COURT SHALL REDACT IDENTIFYING INFORMATION RELATING TO THE VICTIM FROM AN EXISTING FILING OR RECORD.

(5) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO A SUBPOENA FROM A HEALTH OCCUPATIONS BOARD IN FURTHERANCE OF AN INVESTIGATION.