



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 329
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 329.

House Bill 329 – School Resource Officers and Sex with Students - Prohibition

Maryland Criminal Law §3-314 makes it a crime for a law enforcement officer to engage in sexual contact, intercourse, or a sexual act with anyone they are investigating, assisting, or detaining, or with anyone seeking their official help, unless the relationship existed beforehand and was entirely unrelated to the officer's official duties.

However, school resource officers (SROs) are not included in the list of persons prohibited from sexual interactions with those they are investigating, assisting, or detaining, or with anyone seeking their official help. This omission has allowed SROs assigned to schools to protect students to use their authority, access, and trust to pursue sexual relationships with minor students.

HB329 adds school resource officers to the list of positions covered under § 3-314, ensuring that SROs are legally prohibited from engaging in sexual activities with students at their assigned schools.

Students view SROs as law enforcement and are easily intimidated by their authority and vulnerable to exploitation. Maryland's law should recognize SROs for what they are: law enforcement, and should prevent all sexual activity between students and SROs.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judiciary Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 329**