



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 358
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 358.

House Bill 358 – Restitution Reform

This bill fundamentally reforms restitution in the criminal justice system by making it a mandatory part of sentencing. The current system is badly broken and leaves the financial burden of crime on victims, including on victims of sexual assault and child sexual abuse. Perpetrators of these crimes should be responsible for the costs of their actions. Provisions in the bill seek to ensure that poverty is not criminalized and that failure to pay restitution is not the basis for contempt of court, probation revocation, or violation of a condition of release. This is a reasonable balancing and should remain part of the bill.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges
the Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 358**