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**Working to end sexual violence in Maryland**

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**Testimony Opposing House Bill 1242**  
**Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel**  
March 5, 2020

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 unfavorably on House Bill 1242.

**House Bill 1242 – Fundamental Parental Rights**

This bill would place new and heightened burdens on the General Assembly's efforts to protect children, provide education (including education about sexual abuse and consent), or end domestic violence. Legislation by local governments would also be limited. HB1242 has the potential to undermine established laws permitting courts to order temporary custody under protective orders and could, as result, endanger victims and children. It could also be interpreted to overturn current laws requiring that courts limit visitation when a child or spouse has been abused.

House Bill 1242 is both unnecessary and unwise. Both the US and Maryland Constitutions already provide significant protections for parental rights. HB1242 appears to change this constitutional jurisprudence in unintended and harmful ways.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the  
Judiciary Committee to  
report unfavorably on House Bill 1242**