



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 1294
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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 1294.

House Bill 1294 – Reporting Crimes – Privacy and Sexual Assault

This bill requires that law enforcement provide victims of crimes against the person be provided with a private place to report the crime. Crimes against the person include sexual crimes in Title 3, subtitle 3, as well as sexual abuse of a minor, sexual abuse of vulnerable adults, sex trafficking, and many domestic violence cases.

This bill was prompted by the experience of a young woman who had been raped. She went to the police station and was asked to shout the details of her experience to an officer through glass, in a public area, and in front of others. She left. She later returned with her parents and, once again, had to shout out about her experience. MCASA appreciates the courage and determination of this young survivor. We also hope that no other survivor has to face these particular challenges.

Sexual assault remains one of the most underreported crimes. Survivors often feel ashamed of what happened, are (correctly) fearful of being judged, and reluctant to discuss sexual violence. It is unfortunate that HB1294 had to be introduced and that law enforcement did not have the sensitivity to provide crime victims with a private place to report these crimes. House Bill 1294 will ensure this happens in the future.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judiciary Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 1294**