



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

P.O. Box 8782
Silver Spring, MD 20907
Phone: 301-565-2277
Fax: 301-565-3619

For more information contact:
Lisae C. Jordan, Esquire
443-995-5544
mcasa.org

Testimony Supporting House Bill 881
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 Health & Government Operations Committee to report favorably on House Bill 881.

House Bill 881 – Residential Treatment Centers and Facilities
Sexual Abuse and Harassment - Reporting and Prevention

People with disabilities are sexually assaulted at nearly three times the rate of people without disabilities. A 2005 survey of people with disabilities indicated that 60 percent of respondents had been subjected to some form of unwanted sexual activity. Unfortunately, almost half never reported the assault. In general, people with disabilities experience domestic and sexual violence at higher rates than people who do not have a form of disability. Consider the following:

- 83% of women with disabilities will be sexually assaulted in their lives.
- Just 3% of sexual abuses involving people with developmental disabilities are ever reported.
- Approximately 80% of women and 30% of men with developmental disabilities have been sexually assaulted – half of these women have been assaulted more than 10 times.
disabilityjustice.org/sexual-abuse (last visited 3.7.2020)

In 2018, the Maryland General Assembly enacted protections for victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment in state residential treatment facilities. This bill expands these requirements to cover private residential treatment facilities. As important, this bill mandates creation of a written “protection plan” as part of a patient’s treatment plan, and mandates consideration of a patient’s risk of being a victim of sexual or physical abuse or being a sexual or physical abuser.

Patients in residential treatment facilities should be protected against sexual violence whether their facility is public or private. This bill helps increase safety and respond to sexual assault and sexual harassment.

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Health & Government Operations Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 881