



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 701
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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 Judicial Proceedings Committee to report favorably on House Bill 701.

House Bill 701

Training for Health Care Professionals regarding Child Abuse, including Child Sexual Abuse

House Bill 701 will require posting of information regarding training for health care professionals who are required to report child abuse, including child sexual abuse. The requirements of this bill can be met with current resources.

Child sexual abuse is an epidemic in America. Studies by the Crimes Against Children Research Center show that:

- 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys is a victim of child sexual abuse;
- During a one year period in the US, 16% of youth ages 14 to 17 had been sexually victimized;
- Children are most vulnerable to child sexual abuse between the ages of 7 and 13.

It is critical that health care professionals working with children understand not only that they are mandated reporters, but also how to identify abused and neglected children. Child sexual abuse remains under-recognized and under-reported. Training health care professionals is one piece of the effort to change this.

Training can be provided at reasonable cost. MCASA currently has an online training, *Preventing, Identifying, and Reporting Child Sexual Abuse in Maryland*, <https://mcasa.org/online-training>, available at no charge. We would be happy to work with other stakeholders to supplement this training with information on physical abuse and neglect.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judicial Proceedings Committee to report favorably on House Bill 701**