



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 333 with Amendments
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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 Senate Bill 333 with Amendments.

Senate Bill 333 -- Expansion of Mandatory Lifetime Supervision of Sex Offenders

This bill expands the sex offenders subject to mandatory lifetime supervision by adding the age-based sex offenses in Criminal Law §3-306 (victim under 13 and offender over 18) and by expanding lifetime supervision to all offenders convicted of sexual abuse of minor under §3-602.

MCASA notes that lifetime supervision is an important tool in preventing sexual assaults committed by convicted sex offenders. It is a tool that requires substantial resources and, although there is no immediate cost, the fiscal note notes that future costs may be substantial and include \$75,000 just for needed agents. In an era of difficult budgetary pressures, and keeping in mind that 64% of victim services providers faced cuts to Victim of Crime Act funds from the State between 2019 and 2020, MCASA respectfully suggests that the Committee approach expansion of lifetime supervision conservatively and permit rather than require lifetime supervision, particularly in cases involving sexual abuse of a minor involving older minors. We note that these cases can involve babysitters close in age to the victim, extracurricular instructors or coaches close in age to the victim, etc. While we condemn the action of these offenders, we also note that it may be appropriate to provide the courts with some discretion. We also note that the courts currently have this type of discretion after convictions under §3-307(a)(1) and (2); these cases involve actions such as suffocation, strangulation, disfigurement, and dangerous weapons. If we trust courts with discretion in those situations, it also seems appropriate to include discretion in the expansion contemplated under Senate Bill 333.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judicial Proceedings Committee to
report favorably on Senate Bill 333 with Amendments**