

Address confidentiality - testimony - senate - 202

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Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 109
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
January 14, 2021

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 109.

Senate Bill 109 – Address Confidentiality and Expansion

This bill consolidates two existing address confidentiality programs for survivors of domestic violence and for human trafficking, and expands access to additional survivors, including survivors of sexual assault. Permitting all survivors of sexual violence to protect their location is an important and sound improvement to Maryland's public policy.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judicial Proceedings Committee to
report favorably on Senate Bill 109**

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAV_SB109.pdf

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ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

January 14, 2021

**Senate Bill 109
Secretary of State - Address Confidentiality Programs - Merger of Programs and
Expanded Participant Eligibility**

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Catholic Conference represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch)dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

Senate Bill 109 streamlines the administration of the Address Confidentiality Program for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. It would ensure the Secretary of State can administer the program to survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, allow individuals and organizations serving survivors to recommend them for the program, accept a statement from survivors of their subjective fear as an option for proving eligibility, and expand eligibility to include survivors of sexual assault, stalking, and harassment who would benefit from shielding their real property records.

The program is one that the Maryland Catholic Conference often promotes through parish-based education and outreach initiatives as a way to help victims of domestic violence and human trafficking to prevent their perpetrators from obtaining their address.

The Conference supported SB 524 in 2018 which established the deed shielding procedure and welcomes the expansion of this bill to protect even more survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking. Survivors deserve to feel safe and secure in their own homes as they rebuild their lives. Pope Francis has urged us to restore dignity to “those who are wounded, violated and exposed to every form of exploitation, enslavement, violence and abuse,” and to uproot these evils.

It is for these reasons that the Maryland Catholic Conference respectfully urges a favorable report for **SB 109**. Thank you for your consideration.

SB 109 - MDHTTF - Sol.pdf

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Position: INFO



BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 109

TITLE: Secretary of State – Address Confidentiality Programs – Merger of Programs and Expanded Participant Eligibility

COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings

HEARING DATE: January 14, 2021

POSITION: Statement of Information

The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MDHTTF) and its members respectfully submits this Statement of Information on Senate Bill 109.

SB 109 merges two similar address shielding and confidentiality programs in the state, the Human Trafficking Address Confidentiality Program for victims of human trafficking and the Maryland Safe At Home Address Confidentiality Program for victims of domestic violence. It further expands and clarifies the eligibility of the program to survivors of threatened, attempted, or actual domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, harassment, or human trafficking, and allows for a person who resides in the same household of the survivor to apply to the program.

MDHTTF supports efforts to dismantle human trafficking by strengthening laws to prosecute traffickers, providing services and rehabilitation to victims, and increasing awareness of the issue. The Human Trafficking Address Confidentiality Program was statutorily created in 2014 and has been an invaluable tool in protecting survivors of human trafficking by providing a substitute address unknown to and protected from their trafficker and accepting service of process for mail. Eligible participants are provided these services for four years and there are very limited exceptions as to when the Secretary of State may disclose a participant's actual address. As survivors and survivor-advocates have sometimes found navigating the program difficult and confusing, MDHTTF hopes that this merger and expansion of eligibility continues to serve those who need it adequately and properly.

About MDHTTF: Formed in 2007 by the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Attorney General of Maryland, and the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, MDHTTF serves as the lead investigative, prosecutorial, and victim services coordinating body for anti-human trafficking activity in the State of Maryland. MDHTTF has grown to include most law enforcement agencies in the State, all child-serving state agencies, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, Homeland Security Investigations, most local State's Attorney's Offices, and dozens of victim service agencies. MDHTTF is comprised of five committees – legislative, law enforcement, victim services, public awareness, and training. During this time, MDHTTF has grown a robust understanding of the issue of human trafficking in Maryland.

For further questions, please contact the co-chairs of the Legislative Committee of MDHTTF, Amanda Rodriguez at arodriguez@turnaroundinc.org or Anne Wallerstedt at azwallerstedt@gmail.com.