



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 9
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 Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 9.

House Bill 9 – Child Abuse Identification, Prevention & Reporting

This bill requires that Maryland post an online, free course on child abuse identification, prevention and reporting. This is similar to what the District of Columbia has done with its mandated reporter training.

See here to access DC's training:

https://dc.mandatedreporter.org/pages/Overview.action?request_locale=en

Improving the State's response to child sexual abuse is critical:

1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys is a victim of child sexual abuse.

David Finkelhor, Director of the Crimes Against Children Research Center, victimsofcrime.org/media/reporting-on-child-sexual-abuse/child-sexual-abuse-statistics.

Access to no-cost, online training will help youth serving organizations have access to training and will encourage them to require volunteers and employees to participate. Parents, family members, and the public interested in learning how to stop abuse will also be able to easily increase their knowledge. The COVID 19 crisis has made access to online training all the more important as children spend less in person time with teachers and other mandatory reporters. Sadly, the COVID crisis has also made it easier for perpetrators to hide abuse. The more people who know the signs of abuse and how to respond, the more children we will be able to protect.

This bill passed the House of Delegates in the same form during the 2020 session.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges
the Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 9**