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Date: March 2, 2021

Re: House Bill 1122 - Criminal Procedure – Out of Court Statements – Child and Vulnerable Adult Victims

Judiciary Committee

Position: SUPPORT

Summary: House Bill 1122 - Criminal Procedure – Out of Court Statements – Child and Vulnerable Adult Victims authorizes a court to admit into evidence an out of court statement made to certain professionals by a child or vulnerable adult who is the victim or witness of specific enumerated crimes. This bill would allow the testimony of courageous children and vulnerable adults to be corroborated.

Comments: CHANA, a Program of the Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore provides crisis intervention, case management, supportive counseling, shelter, legal advocacy and support to victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse and elder abuse in Baltimore County and Baltimore City. Specifically, CHANA's elder abuse program, SAFE: Stop Abuse of Elders, serves older victims, including vulnerable adults, who have been physically, emotionally, psychologically and financially harmed by a trusted individual. CHANA supports HB 1122 as it will empower and support vulnerable adults who want to participate in the criminal justice process. This bill would corroborate the testimony of the brave victims and witnesses who testify against their abusers.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on HB1122.

CHANA
Advocacy and supportive services for domestic abuse

The Shofar Coalition
Prevention and healing services for childhood trauma and sexual abuse

SAFE: Stop Abuse of Elders
Education and intervention services for older adults