

HB1214
FAVORABLE
Deborah Brocato
3206 Gloucester Dr
Fallston, MD 21047

Dear Delegates,

As a mother of 4 daughters, I speak in favor of House Bill 1214.

This bill seeks to protect all minors, sons and daughters from sexual abuse by requiring those seen as “mandatory reporters” to report suspected abuse within 48 hours of the suspected abuse. The bill also stipulates consequences for those who fail in their duty to protect minors from the sexual abuse or sexual coercion.

The parts of the bill that are of particular interest to me are sections E, F and G.

First, section F provides that there must be parental notification for a minor seeking an abortion. If a minor is seeking an abortion, then it means she has had intercourse. Because she is a minor, it would be important to know the circumstances of her sexual relationship to determine whether or not there is sexual abuse or sexual coercion. The parents may or may not know of their daughter’s pregnancy or of their daughter’s sexual activity. Being the primary caretakers of our children, parents have a right to know what is happening in their children’s lives, especially when there may be predatory activity and/or a life threatening procedure involved. As a mother of 4 daughters, who with my husband, has worked hard to raise them and provide the best possible guidance for them, I know that it is the mothers and fathers who have the best interests of their children in mind. We are the ones responsible for the health and wellbeing of our children. A minor daughter facing a pregnancy needs her parents, not unrelated people like the abortion center employees directing her to make a decision that financially benefits them. If the pregnancy is a result of sexual abuse or sexual coercion, it will be up to the mothers and fathers to guide their daughter through it and provide the appropriate medical and psychological treatment.

Part E addresses the necessity of preserving evidence. If sexual abuse or sexual coercion has occurred and the parents and daughter choose to end the life of the baby, the baby is evidence of the criminal behavior. Any time a minor is receiving an abortion, the evidence of the pregnancy needs to be preserved. We know that victims of abuse are often too afraid at the time to admit to what has happened; therefore, the remains of the pregnancy must be preserved for potential investigations.

I am glad to see Part G provides that those who fail to report abuse, fail to notify parents and/or fail to preserve evidence will be obstructed from repeating these harmful acts.

I urge each of you to recognize the need to protect our daughters. Vote IN FAVOR of this bill.

Sincerely,
Deborah Brocato