



VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

February 8, 2022

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Support – SB300 – Criminal Procedure - Victims of Sexually Assaultive Behavior

Dear Chairman Smith:

Senate Bill 300 alters Maryland law to require, under certain circumstances, an assistant State's Attorney to explain the State's Attorney's decision not to prosecute a suspect accused of engaging in criminal sexual assault. Specifically, Senate Bill 300 would require an assistant State's Attorney to meet with a sexual assault victim upon request when the State's Attorney decides to prosecute, or to dismiss, a case against a sexual assault suspect, so that the State's Attorney has to explain, to the victim herself or himself, why that decision was made.

The Montgomery County Victim Services Advisory Board (VSAB) advises the Montgomery County Council and County Executive on assisting the needs of victims of a broad range of violent crimes, including rape, domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. The number and severity of sexual assault and domestic violence cases referred to the Montgomery County HHS Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program and the Abused Persons Program increased substantially in one year when comparing 2019 and 2020 intake data. This is consistent with data showing violent crime rising nationally, leading to increased prosecutions.

Standing up to an abuser takes an incredible amount of courage. This is especially true for victims of sexual assault, who are especially vulnerable members of our community and are often reluctant to report instances of sexual assault because the abuser may well be someone they know, or even love in the case of intimate partner violence. Senate Bill 300 will ensure that when a sexual assault victim has had the courage to report a sexual assault to the police and the State's Attorney's office, the State's Attorney's office will have the corresponding courage to sit down with the victim and explain why a decision not to prosecute was made in a particular instance. At a minimum, victims of sexual assault deserve that kind of honesty and forthrightness from their government officials. Simply put, it is the right thing to do.

Accordingly, VSAB asks the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 300.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Koosed
VSAB Member

Department of Health and Human Services