



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 819
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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 819.

Senate Bill 819 – Senate Confirmation for Executive Director of GOCPYVS

This bill would require senate confirmation for the Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth & Victim Services (GOCPYVS).

The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth & Victim Services (GOCPYVS), formerly known as the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention (GOCCP), administers the majority of grants that support services for survivors of sexual assault in Maryland. This includes both state and federal funding. Examples include federal funds under the Violence Against Women Act, the Victims of Crime Act, and the Sexual Assault Services Program (under the Violence Against Women Act), and state funds such as Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis (SARC) formula funding, Maryland Victim of Crime Act, and the Legal Services for Crime Victims program.

Programs supported by these grants range from certified rape crisis centers, to child advocacy centers, to programs addressing particular populations, such as those serving sex trafficking survivors or survivors of child sexual abuse. Child advocacy centers, programs critical to child-centered and trauma informed investigations of child sexual abuse also receive support from GOCPYVS.

GOCPYVS has grown from a small advisory group in the Governor's office to a large and ever growing agency. It has resisted legislative oversight, failing to file mandated reports and refusing financial audit directives. The Maryland General Assembly directed an [evaluation of GOCPYVS](#) on April 28, 2021 in response to ongoing concerns.

The evaluation made several recommendations including that the Maryland General Assembly consider requiring that future GOCPYVS executive directors be appointed with advice and consent of the Senate. DLS pointed to GOCPYVS' budget size, its critical role in allocating and monitoring grants across the State, and its organizational complexity. It noted that the GOCPYVS budget is larger than 9 of Maryland's 20 principal departments, and its total staff size exceeds 2 of the principal departments.

MCASA concurs with this recommendation and views it as one important step to repairing a broken agency that is critical to victim services provisions in Maryland.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges
the Judicial Proceedings Committee to
report favorably on Senate Bill 819**