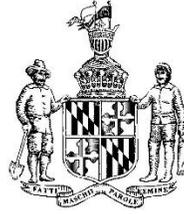


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Testimony in **Support** of
SB0068 (Crossover) – Sexual Offenses –
Crime of Violence and Lifetime Supervision

Dear Chairman Clippinger and members of the committee, I am writing to express my strong support for Crossover Senate Bill 0068 on behalf of State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy and the Maryland State's Attorney Association. Passage of this bill would serve to further provide justice for some of our state's most vulnerable victims.

Current Maryland law marks sexual abuse of a minor as a crime of violence if the victim is under the age of 13 years and the offender is an adult at the time of the offense. Crossover SB68 would expand the lifetime supervision statute to include cases in which the victim is under the age of 16 years and the offender is 21 years or older and would also designate these cases as crimes of violence. This designation is important because offenders who are convicted of a crime of violence become eligible for parole after serving 50% of their sentences, as opposed to 25% for other crimes.

Explaining to a minor victim's family that their case is not being treated the same way as the case of a younger victim is one of the many difficult conversations that we have as prosecutors, and it is just one more injustice suffered by some of our most vulnerable victims. If you consider that 15% of all sexual assault victims are between the ages of 12 and 17 and that 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser, 30% are abused by a family member, and 60% are abused by a person the family trusts, the need to expand this protection becomes clear.

This bill also serves to bring the language of the lifetime sexual offender supervision statute in line with other recent legislative changes. In 2017, this legislative body made the decision to treat survivors of second degree sexual assault and survivors of second degree rape equally under the law, by updating the definition of second degree rape to also include sexual acts as opposed to solely vaginal intercourse. Unfortunately, the language in the lifetime sexual

offender supervision statute was not similarly updated at that time, which causes inequity when applying this important protection. I do not believe that this was the intent of the legislative body, and this bill serves to correct this issue. Statistics show that community supervision, like that provided by the lifetime sexual offender supervision statute, reduces recidivism.

At the end of the day, reducing the amount of sexual abuse of children in our communities and providing equitable treatment to all victims are goals that we all share.

For the foregoing reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report.