



## VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

January 25, 2022

The Honorable Luke Clippinger  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
Room 101, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Support – HB223 – Criminal Law – Person in a Position of Authority – Sexual Offenses with a Minor

Dear Chairman Clippinger:

House Bill 223 alters Maryland criminal law to expand the categories of individuals who may be prosecuted for engaging in sexual acts with a minor. Specifically, House Bill 223 expands the definition of “person in a position of authority” to encompass those working at child-care or other after-school facilities, those tutoring minors or instructing them in music or art, etc. Current law limits the definition of “person in a position of authority,” which creates a loophole where certain abusers can “groom” minors in order to take advantage of them sexually. House Bill 223 attempts to close these gaps and expand the protections Maryland law otherwise gives minors by increasing the punishment for those who would use their position to take advantage of minors.

The Montgomery County Victim Services Advisory Board (VSAB) advises the 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.

Minors are especially vulnerable members of our community. This is doubly the case when minors are in a school or other instructional environment, working with adults they trust to look out for their best interests. Minors should never be exploited in this way. Expanding the definition of “person in a position of authority” will help to deter such behavior and ensure that those who do commit such crimes are punished fully.

VSAB asks the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 223.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Koosed  
VSAB Member

Department of Health and Human Services