



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 121 with Sponsor Amendments
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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 Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 121 only if amended.

House Bill 121 – Repeal of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction Over Peace Orders

This bill would repeal juvenile court jurisdiction over peace orders when the respondent is a minor. This includes cases involving sexual harassment, sexualized cyberstalking and other sex crimes that do not fall under the protective order statute.

Peace orders provide victims and survivors with a civil justice option after an assault, including some sexual assaults (other sexual assault fall under the protective order statute). When a respondent is a minor, the juvenile court has jurisdiction over the matter and petitions are filed with the involvement of an intake officer with the Department of Juvenile Services. This option should not be eliminated unless it is replaced with something more effective. MCASA appreciates that the sponsor will be introducing amendments require a report examining the current system. MCASA urges close examination of whether the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) should be involved in these cases at all. DJS can be a barrier to access to the courts and has created needless delay in some cases.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judiciary Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 121 with Sponsor Amendments**