



**Working to end sexual**

**violence in Maryland**

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**Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 754 with Amendments**  
**Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel**  
March 14, 2023

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 754 with Amendments.

**Senate Bill 754 – Maryland Wiretap and Electronic Surveillance Reform Workgroup**

This bill will create a work group to examine the issues raised by current laws requiring two-party consent to record private conversations. In the era of cell phones, provisions of the code making taping of another without consent a felony are badly out of proportion. More importantly, these provisions are depriving our justice system of the best evidence available in many cases, including rape and sexual assault.

Other bills, including SB749, have suggested carve outs permitting taping of events related to certain crimes, including rape and sexual assault. MCASA believes there may be merit to this approach. We also appreciate the concerns raised by our sister coalition, the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, and so have refrained from supporting SB749 in hopes of resolving these issues. Addressing this issue is long overdue and we welcome a work group to create a comprehensive approach to addressing privacy and the need for best evidence.

MCASA supports creating a work group and asks for an amendment to add the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) to the work group. MCASA is the federally recognized state sexual assault coalition, representing rape crisis centers, survivors, and others across the state. Our members provide support to survivors as they navigate the criminal justice system and can contribute expertise and a survivor-centered perspective. MCASA also joins our colleagues in suggesting including the family law bar and the domestic violence coalition.

Suggested Amendments:

On page 2, lines 7-8, strike

~~(iv) one attorney licensed to practice in the State who specializes in family law;~~

Replace with: **“ONE ATTORNEY LICENSED TO PRACTICE IN THE STATE WHO SPECIALIZES IN FAMILY LAW AND IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND STATE BAR ASSOCIATION FAMILY AND JUVENILE LAW SECTION;” AND**

On page 2, lines 11-12, strike

~~(vi) one representative from a domestic violence prevention and advocacy program in the State;~~

Replace with: **(vi) “THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MARYLAND NETWORK AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, OR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S DESIGNEE;”**

add: **“THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MARYLAND COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S DESIGNEE.”**

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the  
Judicial Proceedings Committee to  
report favorably on Senate Bill 754 with Amendments**