



TESTIMONY FOR HB0016

Primary and Secondary Education – Title IX – Notice (Hear Our Voices Act)

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Jazz Lewis

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0016 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

College campuses are difficult to navigate for most students. They are generally alone for the first time and have so many things they have to assimilate in order to succeed. Very few students bother to learn about administrative policies and where to go to get help. In the case of sexual assault, this lack of knowledge is devastating. Parents are likewise confused, often not close by, and don't have the wherewithal to support their child in these kinds of situations.

Although it is clear that this legislation would require the schools to be more proactive, which is costly and time-consuming, the outcome is worth the expense. Giving students and parents the information up front about who to contact after a sexual assault and what procedures they should expect, and what support they are entitled to, is priceless.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.