

Committees: Judiciary
Testimony on: HB412
Position: Favorable

17 February 2023

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and the members of the Judiciary Committee,

The University of Maryland, Student Government Association supports HB412 because this bill would change Maryland's rape law to focus on whether there is clear and voluntary agreement between the people involved. The definition of consent proposed includes: clear and voluntary agreement, the right to withdraw consent, and Communication through words or conduct. Consent is not: what someone is wearing, a prior relationship, or as a result of fear, threat, or coercion. Documentation is not required.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on this legislation. My name is Caroline Thorne and I serve as the Director of Government Affairs at the University of Maryland, College Park Student Government Association. On behalf of our SGA, I respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 412, to modify Maryland's rape law.

Learning that Maryland law requires more than a lack of consent to prove rape was disappointing, but not shocking. Sexual assault, particularly on college campuses, is a severely underreported problem. About 13% of students experience rape or sexual assault while on college campuses, but only 20% of student victims report these crimes to law enforcement. In my experience as a student leader, I have learned that survivors often refrain from reporting assault despite wanting to, largely because they did not explicitly say the word no. The bottom line is that people should not have sex with someone without their consent.

On behalf of the Student Government Association at the University of Maryland, I urge the Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 412.

Thank you,



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