



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 5 Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel March 29, 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 Judiciary Committee to report favorably on Senate Bill 5.

Senate Bill 5 – Hate Crimes – Civil Remedy

This bill would provide a civil remedy for individuals who have been the victim of a hate crime, including when sexual assault or sexual harassment is motivated by gender, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or other protected characteristics.

Civil remedies give survivors of hate crimes access to civil justice and the ability to recover for damages for economic and noneconomic harms caused by the acts. The total cost of sexual assault to survivors was \$18 million in 2002 dollars. *Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey. Tables 82, 2002.* Fourteen percent of rape and sexual assault survivors lost time from work as a result of their victimization; 28% of those survivors lost 6-10 days. *Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey. Tables 87, 89, 2002.* Workplace sexual harassment can cost individuals anywhere from a few hundred dollars to \$1.3 million over a lifetime. Sexual harassment contributes to the gender wage gap and limits women's earning potential. <https://timesupfoundation.org/work/costs-of-workplace-sexual-harassment/> Trans and non-binary individuals face especially high rates of sexual assault. Nearly half (47%) of respondents to the 2015 Trans Survey were sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime and one in ten (10%) were sexually assaulted in the past year. In communities of color, these numbers were higher: 53% of Black respondents were sexually assaulted in their lifetime and 13% were sexually assaulted in the last year. Far too many of these assaults were motivated by hate. **Access to monetary judgements give survivors the ability to pay for therapy, make up for lost wages, and offset the very real financial impact of hate crimes. SB5 also gives the courts additional flexibility to issue injunctions and stop future hate crimes.**

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judiciary Committee to
report favorably on Senate Bill 5**