



**BILL NUMBER:** SB 0111

**TITLE:** Criminal Procedure – Protection of Identity of Minor Victim

**COMMITTEE:** JPR

**HEARING DATE:** February 1, 2024

**POSITION:** Support

TurnAround, Inc. respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 111. This bill plays an instrumental role in protecting the identity of minor victims. TurnAround’s mission is to educate, advocate for, and empower *all* people impacted by issues of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking. Approximately 25-30% of the clients TurnAround currently serves are under the age of 18.

Confidentiality is critical when supporting survivors and minors are no exception. Disclosing a minor’s identity can exacerbate the existing trauma from having been victimized. The loss of anonymity has the potential to negatively impact recovery and prevent future disclosures. Protecting the identity of a minor victim should be considered a protective measure. There is also shame and stigma that can be tied to being a victim of certain crimes, including sexual assault, human trafficking and intimate partner violence. Protecting identities in these cases could minimize long-term negative effects.

Most concerning, in order to charge certain sex offenses the name of the victim is required to be included in an indictment or criminal complaint. This is ripe for potential harm to survivors and children.

With the accessibility of information on the internet, the possibility of a child’s information being disclosed is particularly significant. This information, if disclosed, will be impossible to fully scrub from the internet, thus following the child for the length of their life. Especially in the age of social media when information and rumors spread rapidly, protecting the identity of a minor victim of abuse and other crimes is imperative to both their psychological and physical safety.

We appreciate the thoughtfulness of this legislation and request a favorable report.

**About TurnAround, Inc** TurnAround, Inc. is the designated rape crisis center for Baltimore City and Baltimore County, and a comprehensive domestic violence center. Crisis response, victim-centered advocacy, legal referrals, trauma therapy, and community education are core components of the agency’s work. TurnAround is the designated Regional Navigator for Howard County providing services to Human Trafficking survivors. TurnAround is a member of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV).

For further questions, please contact Jean Henningsen, Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives at [jhenningsen@turnaroundinc.org](mailto:jhenningsen@turnaroundinc.org) and/or Diana J. Beeson, Engagement and Policy Initiatives Manger at [dbeeson@turnaorundinc.org](mailto:dbeeson@turnaorundinc.org).