



Consent

Background

Sex without consent is not enough to prove rape under Maryland's criminal law. Survivors are required to provide proof of force or proof of threat of force in rape cases. The 2015 Data Debrief from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey revealed just about 1 out of every 5 American Women have been a victim of at least one attempted or completed rape in her lifetime. Revising the law to reflect voluntary consent could mean the absence of sexual assault and domestic violence crimes.

Bill Summary

The purpose of the bill is to focus on consent as the starting point to determine if a sexual crime has occurred. It will clearly define what consent entails and what it does not. Consent is voluntary, it's delivered with enthusiasm and all parties are fully informed. More importantly, consent can be withdrawn at any moment and time. This law speaks to honor and respect. It's a call to respect your partner by honoring their wishes. It can be communicated through verbal and non-verbal cues. Consent is not based on relationship status, one's attire or perceived flirty behavior. It's not based on past experiences either.

What We Are Asking of Legislators

Support the bills in the house and senate.

We are asking legislators to seize the opportunity to create a new standard – a culture of consent. A culture where parties involved in sexual activities are properly educated and can freely discuss and enjoy the parameters of their intimacy. This revision in law will be a high alert that consent is non-negotiable. Survivors will know that their consent matters because of the change in law. They will no longer have to prove a traumatic experience because of the absence of clear consent.

Key Messages

- Empower – Know Your Rights. Expect Respect. Healthy People and Relationships.
- Standard –No blurred lines. Eliminate Taboo Topic. Create Safe Spaces. Encourage connection and conversations.
- Action -Consent is non-negotiable. Laws Support Consent. Promotes Safety.
- Clear consent is not a thing of the past; it's a choice that operates in the here and now.