



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 37
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
March 7, 2024

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 House Bill 37.

House Bill 37 – Correctional Services – Reentry Services for Women

This bill would create a Commission on Reentry Services for Women overseen by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to create a comprehensive reentry plan for formerly incarcerated women, and establish the Reentry Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Women to connect formerly incarcerated women to supportive services.

Over 85 percent of incarcerated women have experienced sexual violence in their lifetimes,¹ and abuse is too often repeated behind prison walls. Women in prison are disproportionately women of color, and the vast majority are economically marginalized. If Maryland is serious about responding to sexual violence and helping survivors heal, it is critical that formerly incarcerated women have the support and services they need to successfully reenter our communities.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judiciary Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 37**

¹ Women's pathways to jail: The roles & intersections of serious mental illness & trauma, Shannon M. Lynch, Ph.D., Dana D. DeHart, Ph.D., Joanne Belknap, Ph.D., Bonnie L. Green, Ph.D. Georgetown University, submitted to the US Dept of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2012.