

## Morgan State University Peer Educators Written Testimony

My name is November Buchanan, a senior social work major at Morgan State University and I am a member of the Peer Educators on campus. We inform students about healthy relationships and sex practices. I am passionate about sexual violence prevention because no one should ever feel afraid to enjoy themselves alone or with a partner. Consent can NEVER be forced. I was taught in high school that consensual sex involves a continuous, enthusiastic yes from everyone involved. Force is one of many ways a yes can be taken advantage of. No means no and yes means yes. Communication is vital in any situation between people and is even more volatile because sex involves passion, vulnerability, and selfishness. People can be manipulated into things that they do not consent to. I support HB 496 because the current definition of rape requiring force excludes other forms of rape such as coercion. It is also hard to prove force because it is a subjective concept. Force can be physical, mental, and emotional because of power dynamics that could be at play. many people experience forms of rape that are not forceful but are traumatic, and they deserve legal justice.