



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 1
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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. MCASA urges the Finance Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 1.

Senate Bill 1 – Protection for Access to Contraception

This bill will expand the definition of “legally protective health care”, including clarifying protection for health care providers advising and providing patients with contraception. This is important for survivors of reproductive coercion.

Survivors of Reproductive Coercion Need Access to Contraception

Reproductive coercion is a form of intimate partner violence where a woman's partner tries to control reproductive decisions by preventing access to or tampering with birth control, or forcing sexual intercourse with the intent of causing pregnancy. Of women who were raped by an intimate partner, 30% experienced a form of reproductive coercion by the same partner. Specifically, about 20% reported that their partner had tried to get them pregnant when they did not want to or tried to stop them from using birth control. About 23% reported their partner refused to use a condom. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/understanding-RRP-inUS.html>

These survivors need to be able to seek forms of contraception that prevent pregnancy despite the coercive acts they face. Senate Bill 1 expands existing protections for providers of reproductive care to clearly and comprehensively cover contraception.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Finance Committee to
report favorably on Senate Bill 1**