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**WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND**  
**THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

February 4, 2025

To: Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair  
Judicial Proceedings Committee

On behalf of the Maryland Women's Caucus, we are pleased to express our **unanimous support** for **SB549: Civil Actions - Immunity - Disclosure of Allegations of Sexually Assaultive Behavior (Stop Silencing Survivors Act)**, sponsored by Senator Love. This critical legislation provides much-needed protections for survivors of sexual violence who choose to speak out, ensuring they are not silenced by retaliatory lawsuits.

Sexual assault remains one of the most **underreported and under-prosecuted crimes** in America. Yet, when survivors bravely come forward, they too often face **intimidation through defamation lawsuits**, designed to retraumatize, financially burden, and discourage them from sharing their experiences. **SB549 ensures that those who disclose their assault in good faith are protected from these retaliatory legal actions, while still preserving the right to sue for knowingly false or malicious allegations.**

This bill is not just about legal protection—it is about **justice, accountability, and ensuring that Maryland supports survivors rather than silencing them.** The vast majority of sexual assault survivors are women, and without these protections, many will remain unheard, fearing the legal consequences of speaking out. **SB549 sends a clear message that Maryland stands with survivors and will not allow the legal system to be weaponized against them.**

We **respectfully urge** the Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a **favorable report** for SB549. By passing this legislation, Maryland will take an essential step toward supporting survivors, protecting free and truthful speech, and ensuring that those who commit sexual violence cannot use the courts to evade accountability.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to justice and to making Maryland a safer, more equitable state for all.