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Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0274 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Criminal Procedure - Child Victims - Testimony in Child Abuse Cases

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0274, Criminal Procedure - Child Victims - Testimony in Child Abuse Cases

I am proud of my two Frederick County legislators for their sponsorship of this important bill. An abused child has been damaged not only in body but in mind and soul. The trauma of that abuse can often last a lifetime and destroy the child's happiness and sense of self-worth. To then make that child be in the presence of their abuser compounds all of the damages the abuse has inflicted upon them. The abuser's manipulation of the child's trust could create a situation in which, viewing that abuser directly, threats and warnings from their abuser become primary motivators in a child's testimony against the individual.

Childhood and children are precious. My Jewish faith teaches me how to treat a child who has suffered damage, as Isaiah 1:17 says "Learn to do good, seek justice, strengthen the robbed, perform justice for the orphan, plead the case of the widow." An abused child must have justice having been robbed of that childhood. It is incumbent upon us then to strengthen them by protecting them from their abuser and this bill will help the justice system to accomplish that end.

The protection of the life, health, and safety of children in is a primary responsibility of every adult in Maryland. This bill expands the capability of the criminal justice system to meet that responsibility. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0274.**