



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 721
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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 which provides direct legal services for survivors across the State of Maryland. We urge the Judicial Proceedings Committee to report favorably on Senate Bill 721.

Senate Bill 721 – Consent to Permanent Protective Order

This bill would allow the Court to issue a permanent protective order based on the respondent's consent.

Currently, in order to get a permanent protection order against a respondent, the respondent has to have been convicted and sentenced to serve a term of imprisonment of at least 5 years for the act of abuse that led to the issuance of the interim, temporary, or final protective order and the individual must have served at least 12 months of the sentence, or, during the term of an interim, temporary, or final protective order, the respondent must have committed an act of abuse against the person eligible for relief; and the individual was convicted and sentenced to serve a term of imprisonment of at least 5 years for the act and must have served at least 12 months of the sentence. Senate Bill 721 would allow a permanent order of protection to be entered if agreed upon by the respondent.

Senate Bill 721 would provide greater flexibility to ensure protection of survivors and make the system more supportive of their needs. Some survivors of sex offenses are most concerned about the perpetrator staying away from them and less concerned about the length of the sentence. Additionally, the current law's requirement that the defendant have served at least 12 months of a sentence before a permanent order can be issued is particularly burdensome because it requires the survivor to return to court after a year.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judicial Proceedings Committee to
report favorably on Senate Bill 721**