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**Working to end sexual violence in Maryland**

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**Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 206**  
**Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel**  
January 14, 2025

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. We appreciate the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention & Policy's continued attention and work on improving Maryland's response to sexual assault, including on providing sexual assault forensic exams, ensuring rape kit testing, and supporting survivors.

Senate Bill 206 would alter the current Rape Kit Testing Grant Fund.

Our concern is this: Maryland has made a promise to sexual assault survivors to address the back log of untested and unsubmitted rape kits with its SAKI project (Sexual Assault Kit Initiative). There are still **thousands** of untested kits in the state, each one of them reflecting the experience of a human being who was sexually violated and underwent an exam in hopes of someday seeking justice. Federal funds currently support the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative. These funds support not only testing, but also investigation, and – importantly – victim notification and support. Funds will end in September 2025 and renewal is possible, but uncertain.

Senator Shelly Hettleman and Vice Chair Sandy Bartlett have legislation in drafting to ensure the SAKI project continues as a priority under the Rape Kit Grant Fund IF there is no further federal support and IF the General Assembly chooses to continue the state Rape Kit Fund. MCASA respectfully asks the Committee to delay consideration of Senate Bill 206 until the other legislation is filed and heard, and to consider the language in both bills. The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention & Policy had discussions with legislators and with MCASA regarding suggested changes to their bill, however, we have not seen final language. The current bill runs the risk of exchanging Maryland's backlog of untested kits for a backlog of tested kits which are sitting waiting for investigation and victim notification.

Please know that survivors with untested rape kits can reach out to the  
**SAKI Hotline** at: **833-364-0046** or **notification@mcasa.org**