

I am a 17 year old advocate for sexual assault prevention and survivor protections. I brought this issue to Delegate Guyton and have worked very hard on HB 613. Protection of sexual assault survivors is an issue that's very close to my heart, and I knew I wanted to help increase survivor privacy protections.

When I was 14 I was sexually assaulted by a boy who I knew was involved in serious criminal activity. My parents immediately began an investigation to build a case against the perpetrator. I was scared out of my mind, so I made my parents drop the case. I knew if we were to pursue legal action my name would be out there, and if not him then one of his associates would come after me. I am so grateful that this committee helped pass SB111 to protect minor victims' privacy, however this law only applies to those under 18. If I were just 4 years older when I'd been sexually assaulted, these privacy protections would not apply to me. The lack of victim protection laws for sexual assault cases would have made it very easy for anyone to find out who I was, especially due to easily accessible courthouse kiosks.

Sexual assault cases differ from other criminal cases in that they are extremely sensitive. That goes for both children and adults too. Thanks to SB111, the disclosure of court filings regarding a minor victim to non-parties without redaction of identifying information is prohibited. But this law only applies to those under 18.

As for adults, they may request anonymity but it is a cumbersome process and most people without a law degree would have no idea how. Furthermore, in cases of sex crimes, the victim's name is actually *required* under criminal law 3317. Due to the sensitivity and frequent retaliation associated with sexual assault cases regardless of the victim's age, adult sexual assault survivors should be granted these protections as well.

It's been over 3 years and this is my first time publicly sharing my story. It's terrible and tragic, but I want to use my experience to help other women and girls like me. The government has a duty to ensure the safety of sexual assault survivors and a part of that is protecting identities to support those who come forward and prosecute their offenders. It should be the standard policy- not discretionary- that court filings redact identifying information of sexual assault survivors- both children and adults.