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**Maryland**  
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET  
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## **HOUSE BILL 456 CIVIL ACTIONS - CHILD NONSEXUAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT - DAMAGES AND STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS**

### **STATEMENT OF OPPOSITION**

**DATE:** February 13, 2025

**COMMITTEE:** Judiciary

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** The bill establishes a minimum 20-year statute of limitations for civil actions related to child nonsexual abuse and neglect, with the damages awarded per claimant capped at \$1,500,000 per incident or occurrence.

**EXPLANATION:** Following the passage of the Child Victims Act of 2023, which sought to ensure that survivors of child sexual abuse in Maryland can pursue civil remedies despite any previously applicable statute of limitations, the State of Maryland is facing a significant financial liability, which is not yet addressed in the budget. HB 456 is similar in nature, addressing nonsexual abuse and neglect, and could represent another very significant financial liability for the State without a mechanism to fund the liability. HB 456 also provides for a lengthy limitations period for the filing of any such claim, allowing for it to be filed within 20 years after the alleged victim of the nonsexual abuse or neglect reaches 18 years of age or 3 years after a defendant is convicted of a crime related to the abuse, whichever is later. The State recognizes the profound and lasting impact of abuse on individuals who suffered harm under the State's supervision, and we remain committed to supporting victims seeking justice.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is charged with submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually and will be working with the General Assembly to achieve structural balance over the long term. In light of current projected general fund deficits in fiscal 2027as and significant uncertainty regarding the federal budget and policy changes, forward,as well as significant uncertainty regarding the federal budget and policy changes the Department urges caution in passing legislation to significantly increase general fund expenditures without commensurate decreases in other areas or additional revenue to fund the new liability. State government must be intentional, disciplined, and strategic with its allocation of State funding to ensure maximum impact toward priority outcomes.

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Given the forecasted out-year deficits for the General Fund and significant uncertainty regarding the federal budget and policy changes, it would be extremely challenging for the State to manage this increase in liability.

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