



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 5 with Sponsor Amendments
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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 (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 urge the Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 5 with Sponsor Amendments.

House Bill 5 -- Child Pornography/Child Sexual Abuse Materials

This bill seeks to update Maryland's law on child pornography. As introduced, it adds "IMAGES CREATED THROUGH THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SOFTWARE" to "computer generated image". After discussions with prosecutors, MCASA concurs that this is not a necessary update to the statute. However, the statute should be updated to more accurately reflect the crime: the phrase "child pornography" should be replaced with "child sexual abuse materials." This change is already in use throughout the field and Maryland's use of "child pornography" is dated.

Victims portrayed in child sexual abuse materials suffer long lasting and repeated harm. They are sexual abused during the creation of the images, and then these victims experience repeated harm as the pictures of their abuse are circulated. The material travels the web, around the world, and is shared by the sex offenders interested in exploiting children by viewing their sexual abuse. Our law should name this crime for what it is: child sexual abuse materials.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judiciary Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 5 with Sponsor Amendments**