



House Judiciary Committee
HB 677: Criminal Procedure – Out of
Court Statements – Vulnerable Adult
Victims and Witnesses
February 11, 2025
Position: Support

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The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights and quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Individuals with IDD are at least 2 times more likely to be victims of violent crimes and 4 to 10 times more likely to be victims of abuse and other crimes, yet their cases are rarely investigated or prosecuted. This is often because of discrimination, devaluation, and prejudice that they are not worthy of protection.ⁱ

There are also pervasive, mistaken and generalized stereotypes about people with IDD: that they cannot be considered competent witnesses.

As victims of crimes, people with IDD (like others) should be presumed competent until proven otherwise. They have a right to protection– by laws and policies that ensure their right to justice and fair treatment– and the right to receive the victim supports and accommodations they need, both inside and outside of court, so their testimonies may be fairly considered. For some, this may mean the opportunity for their out-of-court statements to be admitted into evidence.

Sincerely,
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ⁱ <https://thearc.org/position-statements/criminal-justice-system/>