



TESTIMONY FOR HB0442
CRIMINAL PROCEDURE – VICTIMS AND WITNESSES – OUT OF COURT
STATEMENT OF CHILD TO FORENSIC INTERVIEWER

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Simpson

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0442 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

It is always a tragedy when there is a child involved in criminal matters. It is important to protect the rights of the child, but equally important to get to the truth of the issue. The current law is very strict about the admissibility of out-of-court statements made by child victims or witnesses to ensure that the person who is relaying that information is trustworthy and impartial enough to speak truthfully and clearly.

This bill will add a forensic interviewer to the list of parties whose testimony regarding the out-of-court statements of child victims or witnesses is admissible in court. A forensic interviewer is a professional who works with a child advocacy center and is knowledgeable and experienced in interviewing children in a nonleading, neutral, and legally sound manner.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee