

**Bill Number: HB 613**

**Scott D. Shellenberger, State's Attorney for Baltimore County  
Support**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SCOTT D. SHELLENBERGER,**  
**STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY,**  
**IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 613**  
**CRIMINAL PROCEDURE – PROTECTION OF IDENTITY OF VICTIM OF SEXUAL**  
**ASSAULT**

I write in support of House Bill 613 as a much needed protection for victims of sexual assault.

Criminal Procedure 11-301 has for years allowed the state at the request of a victim or witness during a criminal trial ask of the victim the court to prohibit disclosure of the release of an address or telephone number.

The Statute extends these protections to minors whose names are listed in a document if they were a minor when the crime occurred.

House Bill 613 extends these protections to victims of sexual assault. The state must not disclose or allow inspection or disclosure of any document to a non party that would contain identifying information.

Within the Statute there are ways to permit disclosure if the court finds good cause to disclose.

These additions will protect a very vulnerable group of people who need assurances that their names will not be revealed to the media or on the internet.

Shielding personal identifying information may further encourage victims to come forward in cases that are subjected to wide media coverage. It is common for a victim to not disclose sexual abuse until years later, indicating he or she was fearful of his or her name being publicized and facing further scrutiny from the press. This could also result in additional victims coming forward against a perpetrator when they recognize that the original victim has remained anonymous, and allow for a stronger criminal case to prosecute.

This could also be a benefit in cases where there is not publicity, but a victim is fearful of friends or family members finding out that he or she has come forward. This would allow the victim to remain unidentified until he or she is willing to disclose to others on his or her own terms.

I urge a favorable report.

