



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 533
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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 533.

House Bill 533 – Military and Civil Protective Orders

This bill would permit Maryland state courts to consider whether a military protective order has been issued when deciding whether to issue a civil protective order. It would also require civil authorities to share information regarding violations of a military protection order.

Sexual assault and abuse can provide the bases for both civil protective orders and military protection orders. With eleven active military bases or installations in the State, and many military members, there are significant numbers of litigants seeking protective orders or responding to petitions who have military ties. Survivors seeking these orders face a bewildering process and lack of information sharing between civil and military authorities.

Advocates and attorneys report difficulty negotiating two differing systems and challenges enforcing orders. Military orders are not subject to enforcement by civilian authorities. Commanders are instead required to advise survivors who desire protection off base to seek a civilian protective order and direct them to the appropriate victim support service. Military officials are directed to enforce civil orders, but do not always learn of violations of either military or civil order.

House Bill 533 will require information sharing between Maryland state courts and the military, and clarify that civil courts may consider whether a military order has been issued. This will help keep survivors safe.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 533**