



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 706
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
February 11, 2025

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 706.

House Bill 706 – Wiretap
Change to Misdemeanor, 5 year Statute of Limitation & Restitution

This bill would reclassify violation of the all-party consent law for audio recordings from a felony to a misdemeanor, provide for a 5 year statute of limitations, and provides that restitution may not be limited.

Victims of violent crime, including sex crimes, have recorded their assaults in an attempt to document what has occurred. Current law prohibits use of these audio recordings in court proceedings and classifies the victims as felons. This discourages reporting of violent crime. HB706 is a modest step towards reducing the penalty for these crime victims. It also more appropriately responds to this type of recording in an era of ubiquitous cell phones and the ability to record at almost any time.

MCASA notes that the recently heard HB130 would also reclassify these crimes as misdemeanors. MCASA supports the policies contained in both bills.

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report favorably on House Bill 706