

**Sponsor Testimony: Delegate Aaron Kaufman**  
**Sexual Misconduct Bill (HB 495)**  
**February 12, 2025 – House Ways and Means Committee**

Good afternoon, Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and esteemed colleagues. I am Delegate Aaron Kaufman, representing District 18, Montgomery County.

I am requesting a favorable report on HB 495 - Education – Discrimination Policies – Policy and Notice Requirements, shortened to Sexual Misconduct Notification Bill. This issue was brought to my attention by RAINN, the largest anti-sexual violence organization in the nation. HB 495 would require schools to bring their policies and resources forward and proactively communicate them to their school community for grades K-12 and universities. Schools are already required to have sexual misconduct notification policies – thus this legislation imposes **no new restrictions on schools and universities**.

This will ensure that victims of sexual violence are able to *find* the resources they need after experiencing traumatizing events of sexual violence. It took a victim of sexual assault in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) over 25 minutes to find the resources and policies provided by her school. When survivors of sexual assault are experiencing a moment of crisis, they are left digging through web pages or googling what to do with their parents because of information and resources being buried deep in school websites.

Students and staff need to know where to go and who to go to ahead of time as most cannot be expected to engage in rational thinking after an extremely traumatizing event of sexual violence. Victims deserve to have easy access to the resources and policies available to them. Across the board, only a third of students feel very knowledgeable about where to get help and how to report sexual misconduct. Victims of sexual assault who have experienced a traumatizing event should not be forced to dig deep to find resources they need. We need to do better for victims of sexual violence. 21% of middle schoolers reported that they experienced unwanted physical touching on school grounds. 26.4% of females and 6.8% of undergraduate males experience rape or sexual assault. At the University of Maryland, College Park, my alma mater, approximately 1/3rd of students, about 30.7 percent of students, had not received any information about sexual assault from UMD during the 2022 academic year.

A lack of transparency means survivors cannot come forward and more students are put at risk. No victim of violence should feel unheard or have the need to look on a website for over 25 minutes just to find resources available to them after sexual violence.

I understand that this bill may cost schools additional funds on the front end, but it would cost more in the long run with litigation, lawsuits and bad press.

Therefore, I ask for a favorable report on HB 495 – the Sexual Misconduct Notification Bill. Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions.

