



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Opposing House Bill 15
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
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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 Kit Initiative Victim Notification Project, a statewide project to support survivors with untested rape kits. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all its members working to eliminate sexual violence. We urge the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee to report unfavorably on House Bill 15.

House Bill 15

Imposing Government Public Information Act Requirements on Private Nonprofit Organizations

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault strongly opposes House Bill 15, a bill that attempts to gain access to private organization's records by placing them under Public Information Act laws. HB15 appears to be at least partly concerned with non-profit staff salaries funded by state monies. Government already routinely requests salary information prior to awarding any grant, and evaluation of salaries and budget is part of the grant award process. Information about higher salaries is also publicly available on a non-profit organization's 990 filed with the IRS.

At MCASA and our member organizations, HB15 would distract and detract from our mission of helping sexual assault survivors and holding offenders accountable. Applying the Public Information Act (PIA) would extend far beyond financial information and require disclosure of strategy, internal conversations regarding policy positions, donor names, and other private matters. This would fundamentally change an organization from a being private to being an arm of government bureaucracy. This would decrease efficiency and waste scarce resources.

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