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Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Senator Jeff Waldstrecher, Vice-Chair  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: House Bill 1005 – Child Abuse and Neglect – Reporting (Survivor Reporting Reform Act)**  
**Position: Support**

Dear Chair Smith, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I write as a psychologist in practice in Towson, Maryland and am writing in strong support of House Bill 1005, the Survivor Reporting Reform Act. This legislation thoughtfully addresses an important gap in Maryland's child abuse reporting framework by recognizing that many survivors disclose abuse only in adulthood. By requiring the Department of Human Services to develop a standardized reporting form specifically for cases in which the victim is now an adult, HB 1005 creates a structured, consistent pathway for professionals to respond to these disclosures in a manner that is both informed and respectful of survivor experiences.

A particularly important feature of this bill is its trauma-informed approach. HB 1005 requires that individuals who are the subject of a report be provided with clear information about how their disclosures may be used and allows them to express their preferences regarding whether an investigation should proceed. This balances the State's interest in safety and accountability with the autonomy and dignity of survivors, many of whom may have complex reasons for disclosing abuse later in life. The bill also ensures that relevant information is gathered in a careful and comprehensive manner, including whether the alleged perpetrator currently has access to children, thereby supporting both survivor-centered practice and ongoing child protection.

Finally, HB 1005 strengthens coordination and clarity for mandated reporters by establishing a uniform process developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including clinicians, law enforcement, and survivors themselves. This collaborative approach will improve the quality and consistency of reports while reducing uncertainty for professionals responding to adult disclosures of childhood abuse. By modernizing the reporting framework to reflect what we know favorable report on House Bill 1005.

**I urge the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to provide a favorable report on HB 1005.** If I can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

*Paul C. Berman*

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