



**BILL NO:** Senate Bill 531  
**TITLE:** **Criminal Procedure - Victims of Sexually Assaultive Behavior – Request for Verbal Acknowledgement**  
**COMMITTEE:** Judicial Proceedings  
**HEARING DATE:** February 17, 2026  
**POSITION:** FAVORABLE

---

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that works to lead diverse community partners toward the common purpose of reducing the occurrence and impact of intimate partner violence. **MNADV urges this Committee to vote favorably on SB 531.**

Senate Bill 531 aims to protect the rights of survivors during their initial interactions with law enforcement. It specifically targets a procedural loophole that can lead to survivors unintentionally forfeiting their rights or limiting the scope of a criminal investigation. Senate Bill 531 amends the Maryland Code of Criminal Procedure to prohibit law enforcement agencies from asking a survivor for a verbal acknowledgement which would relieve the agency of its obligations. By banning these verbal waivers (current law already prohibits a form to effectuate waiver of any of these rights), the bill ensures that a survivor doesn't accidentally verbally "sign away" their right to a full investigation or a future lawsuit before they have had time to process the event or consult with an advocate.

This is a common sense bill to close a loophole for survivors who are almost always in active trauma early in the investigative phase of an alleged crime.

For all of the above reasons, MNADV urges a favorable report in SB 531.

---

For further information contact Laure Ruth ■ Public Policy Director ■ 301-852-3930 ■ [lruth@mnadv.org](mailto:lruth@mnadv.org)

1997 Annapolis Exchange Parkway, Suite 300 ■ Annapolis, MD 21401  
Tel: 301-429-3601 ■ E-mail: [info@mnadv.org](mailto:info@mnadv.org) ■ Website: [www.mnadv.org](http://www.mnadv.org)