



TESTIMONY FOR SB0295 – Civil Actions – Immunity – Disclosure of Allegations of Sexually Assaultive Behavior (Stop Silencing Survivors Act) – FAVORABLE

Bill Sponsor: Senator Love, Gile, and Hettleman

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Jessica Gorski, Executive Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Gorski, and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of **SB0295** on behalf of the **Maryland Legislative Coalition**. We are a statewide coalition of grassroots activist organizations representing well over 30,000 Marylanders across every legislative district. Our mission is to promote legislation in areas such as education, the environment, public safety, healthcare, and social justice that support all Marylanders and improve their lives. We put the power of the people to work in shaping legislation in Maryland.

SB0295 is crucial for safeguarding survivors and witnesses, ensuring they can report sexual assault without fear of retaliation or legal threats.

This bill ensures that people who disclose allegations of sexual assault or sexually assaultive behavior are not subjected to civil liability simply for coming forward. It provides immunity when individuals share allegations in good faith, recognizing that reporting misconduct is essential to public safety and accountability. Without these protections, survivors and witnesses may remain silent out of fear of lawsuits designed to punish or silence them.

The threat of civil action has long been used to discourage reporting, shield perpetrators, and prevent institutions from addressing harmful behavior. SB0295 removes that barrier. By establishing clear and enforceable immunity provisions, the bill strengthens trust in reporting systems and encourages individuals to speak up when they experience or witness sexual harm.

When people feel safe to report misconduct, communities become safer. This encourages the audience to see their role in promoting transparency and justice, reinforcing Maryland's commitment to public safety.

SB0295 also reflects a trauma-informed approach to supporting survivors. Individuals who report sexual assault—particularly women, LGBTQ+ Marylanders, and members of marginalized communities—often face heightened risks when their disclosures are met with retaliation. Protecting them from civil liability affirms Maryland's commitment to fairness, dignity, and the right to seek help without fear of liability.

This legislation aligns directly with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. It advances public safety, supports social justice, and ensures that Marylanders can participate in accountability systems without being silenced. By protecting those who come forward, SB0295 strengthens community trust and promotes a safer, more equitable Maryland.

I appreciate your consideration. We respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on **SB0295**.