

# **HB1005 – Child Abuse and Neglect – Reporting (Surv**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



## TESTIMONY

### HB1005 – Child Abuse and Neglect – Reporting (Survivor Reporting Reform Act)

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Forbes

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, CoChair

**Position:** **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in support of **HB1005** on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

As we are learning, many adults disclose abuse only years later, often after long periods of silence shaped by fear, shame, or trauma. When they do come forward, they deserve a reporting system that is clear, accessible, and respectful. HB1005 helps create that system through a standardized form that will improve documentation, reduce barriers to reporting, and support more consistent follow-up by the appropriate agencies.

The Department of Human Services must develop a standardized written report in consultation with health practitioners, survivors of abuse, law enforcement, and State’s Attorneys. This collaborative approach ensures that the reporting process reflects the need to avoid retraumatization while serving as the foundation for pursuing justice for unthinkable crimes.

HB1005 aligns with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. Our work centers on transparency, accountability, and justice. Ensuring that adult survivors have a reliable pathway to report abuse is essential to those values shared by all Marylanders.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on HB1005.

# **HB1005 CPMC FAV JPR.pdf**

Uploaded by: Diana Philip

Position: FAV

## THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

*Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. We strive to secure budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and wellbeing.*



### **HB1005 - Child Abuse and Neglect – Reporting (Survivor Reporting Reform Act)**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**April 2, 2026**

**Position: SUPPORT**

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children is a consortium of organizations and individuals formed in 1992 who are concerned about the care of Maryland's most vulnerable children and work together to educate and promote meaningful child welfare reform. **CPMC urges a favorable report on HB1005 - Child Abuse and Neglect - Reporting (Survivor Reporting Reform Act).**

An adult survivor of child abuse who has not reported the maltreatment they experienced under the age of 18 may be placed in a difficult position when disclosing about their trauma to someone who is a mandatory reporter – most likely a mental health practitioner. Like many other states, it is a criminal offense in Maryland for a mandatory reporter to fail to report the alleged abuse to appropriate authorities. If there are currently children under the care or control of the alleged abuser, there is an urgency to collect relevant information to complete the mandatory report to help prevent harm to anyone who may be vulnerable as well as help track the alleged violations of the accused for the purposes of justice and accountability in both the criminal justice and civil court actions. It is currently unclear in Maryland how an adult survivor should document the abuse and with which authority that record should be submitted, especially if the abuse occurred across state lines.

HB1005 seeks to identify the process for Maryland of ways the abuse could be documented as well as the degree the adult survivor could influence whether an investigation should commence and their willingness to be contacted by the authorities. This is a very complicated issue which warrants much time and consideration in gathering the perspectives of survivors, health practitioners, local social service agencies, law enforcement, victim assistance, and state attorney's office personnel. The bill's language focuses primarily on the development of a form, but the process itself which includes identifying clear and comprehensive policies and procedures will conclude May 1, 2028.

Our coalition welcomes an inclusive process which seeks to consider all factors and allow survivors the ability to help guide the outcome. It is for these reasons that the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children **a favorable report on HB1005 - Child Abuse and Neglect - Reporting (Survivor Reporting Reform Act).**<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Members of CPMC represented by this written testimony include – the American Academy of Pediatrics - Maryland Chapter, Child Justice, Citizen's Review Board for Children, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA - Baltimore County), The Family Tree, the State Council on Child Abuse & Neglect (SCCAN), and individual members of the coalition.

**HB1005\_DHS\_FAV (JPR).pdf**

Uploaded by: Gloria Brown-Burnett

Position: FAV



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Stacy L. Rodgers, Acting Secretary*

April 2, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East Miller, Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB 1005 - FAMILY LAW - CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT -  
REPORTING (SURVIVOR REPORTING REFORM ACT) - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 1005 (HB 1005). HB 1005 was reported favorably with amendments that DHS supports and passed 133-0.

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS provides preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities to assist Marylanders in reaching their full potential. Our Social Services Administration (SSA) implements the Child Protective Services (CPS) program which is affected by HB 1005. HB 1005 would partially codify existing practice, and expand the structure and reporting mechanisms for child victims who are now adults.

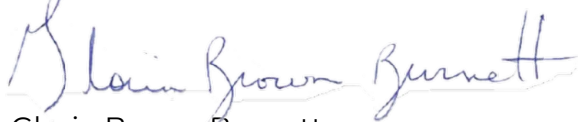
HB 1005 strengthens the process used by mandated reporters for accounts of abuse or neglect disclosed by adults who were children at the time the alleged incident occurred. The bill addresses the lack of a clear and separate process for victims who are now adults, and ensures the department handles these matters with care and consideration. Currently, Maryland law requires these reports of abuse or neglect, but lacks a specialized process to meet the unique needs of adult survivors. The bill addresses this gap by requiring the Department to consult with survivors and by mandating the report to document how and whether the survivor would like a subsequent investigation to proceed. This framework ensures mandated reporters fulfill their statutory duties while granting adult survivors meaningful input into whether a formal investigation proceeds.

Mandated reporting is defined in [Family Law § 5-704](#) and interpreted to mean that all mandated reporters must submit reports of suspected child abuse and neglect, even if the individual is now an adult. Today, there is minimal structural difference in how reports are submitted, processed, and investigated when the alleged victim is a child or an adult. The shared process causes confusion among some mandated reporters, particularly health practitioners, where the response from the Department should depend on whether the alleged victim of abuse or neglect is a child or an adult.

When an adult shares their experience of childhood abuse or neglect with a mandated reporter, there are additional factors taken into account prior to the Department launching an investigation. There are some scenarios where the adult may still live with the abuser and needs mail regarding an investigation sent to a different address. An adult victim may also prefer to avoid an investigation, or an investigation could be too painful for them to relive in the detail necessary to assist with the investigation. HB 1005 would offer adult victims additional options for reporting abuse or neglect, as well as privacy and greater control of their experience.

We thank Delegate Forbes for bringing HB 1005 forward and appreciate the opportunity to provide favorable testimony to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at [justin.hayes1@maryland.gov](mailto:justin.hayes1@maryland.gov).

In service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gloria Brown Burnett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Gloria Brown Burnett  
Deputy Secretary for Operations

# **NASW Maryland - 2026 HB 1005 FAV - Survivor Report**

Uploaded by: Karessa Proctor

Position: FAV



**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**April 2, 2026**

**House Bill 1005: Child Abuse and Neglect - Reporting (Survivor Reporting Reform Act)**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

The National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD), representing licensed social workers across the State of Maryland, respectfully submits this testimony in support of House Bill 1005. This legislation would require the Department of Human Services to develop a form for the submission of a written report concerning suspected child abuse or neglect for cases in which the victim is currently an adult.

Social Workers are among those who are mandated by law to report child abuse and neglect, even in those cases where the child who experienced the neglect is currently an adult. Current law requires mandated reporters to make an oral report as soon as possible and a written report to the local department not later than 48 hours after the contact, examination, attention, or treatment that caused the individual to believe that the child had been subjected to abuse or neglect.

While reporting child abuse at the time that a child is being subject to the abuse is an easy call to make, reporting abuse that may have happened many years or decades earlier is often complicated and can appear less urgent. This bill will cause a specific form to be produced which can be used for making the written report for cases where the individual believed to be abused is at least 18 years old. Such a form will make reports uniform and will assist the mandated reporter in meeting the legal requirements most successfully.

NASW-MD asks for a FAVORABLE report on HB 1005.

Respectfully submitted,

Daphne McClellan, PhD, MSW  
Legislative Co-Chair, NASW-MD Chapter

# **CSA adult survivors - testimony - 2026 - MCASA HB**

Uploaded by: Lisae C Jordan

Position: FAV



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**Working to end sexual violence in Maryland**

P.O. Box 8782  
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Phone: 301-565-2277  
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For more information contact:  
Lisae C. Jordan, Esquire  
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**Testimony Supporting House Bill 1005**  
**Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel**  
April 2, 2026

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 Legal Institute (SALI), a statewide legal services provider for survivors of sexual assault. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all of its members working to eliminate sexual violence. We urge the Judicial Proceedings Committee to report favorably on House Bill 1005.

**House Bill 1005 -- Reports of Child Abuse by Adult Survivors**

This bill will create a form providing for alternative method of reporting child abuse, including child sexual abuse, when the victim is over 18.

MCASA appreciates this thoughtful approach to a very real problem that presents significant competing concerns. Adult survivors of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, often seek therapy and other support needed in the aftermath of abuse. Access to clinical services can be critical to long term mental health and recovery. Mental health services providers, including those at rape crisis centers, regularly encounter survivors who are reluctant to receive therapy or choose not to get help when they learn that their "confidential" counselor is a mandatory reporter who must report suspected child abuse or neglect to the government. In child sexual abuse cases, this involves both child protective services and law enforcement, coordinating pursuant to Family Law §5-706(g).

Mandatory reporting, however, is a cornerstone of child protection efforts in Maryland and across the country. Statutes create a complicated web of requirements for government to investigate and respond to child abuse. If people do not report suspected abuse, many children would be left without protection from further abuse. Maryland has criminalized mandatory reporters who fail to report abuse. This complicates treatment decisions when an adult patient asks that abuse not be reported: even when a clinician may believe delaying a report is necessary for treatment, they risk criminal exposure for failing to report.

The response of the State to delayed reporting makes this complicated situation even more difficult: many, even most, delayed reports do not result in any action. This leaves survivors of abuse feeling frustrated and betrayed. They have been forced to reveal information they felt was personal and were not ready to disclose and then nothing happens. On the other hand, some delayed reports do result in actions that protect vulnerable children and hold offenders accountable.

HB1005 helps provide some balance to these concerns with a small step forward: it requires a form to use with adult survivors. Critical to this process is gathering information about the survivor's preferences for investigation and future contact. MCASA fully supports this step. We also appreciate sponsor amendments adopted in the House to require that the form include a space for information regarding whether the abuser is known to have access to children currently, including clear indication that no investigation should be undertaken.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the  
Judicial Proceedings Committee to  
report favorably on House Bill 1005**

# **HB 1005 FAV Melissa Wesner LifeSpring Counseling S**

Uploaded by: Melissa Wesner

Position: FAV

## HB 1005 FAV Melissa Wesner / LifeSpring Counseling Services

### Adult Survivor Reporting Testimony

My name is Melissa Wesner, and I'm a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor who is licensed in Maryland.

I am in favor of HB1005 as a step forward in addressing the very real and unaddressed concerns with Maryland's Adult Survivor Guidelines and **Reporting Processes**.

When individuals are abused and neglected, their power, control, and autonomy are taken away from them. When adult survivors make the brave decision to seek therapy, they are met with unfortunate news in their very first session where they are told that their therapist will have to break their confidentiality and file a report if they provide identifiable information about suspected child abuse or neglect. **It doesn't matter if the abuser is deceased, nor does it matter if the adult survivor is OK with that information being reported. Once again, due to this law, adult survivors' voice, rights to privacy, and personal agency are taken away from them.** **The impact of this** ranges anywhere from: trauma survivors dissociating in session, clients dropping out of therapy, clients getting upset when their therapist has to file a report, and/or filtering one's speech in a place where they should be able to speak freely in the pursuit of healing.

**The current administrative process for filing an adult survivor report is sloppy, fragmented, and unclear.**

1. At this time, there is **no Adult Survivor Reporting FORM**. Mandated reporters must take the child abuse report and write Adult Survivor at the top.
2. **There is also no streamlined system across the state of Maryland for making these reports.** Each county has a different process. Most recently, providers needing to file adult survivor reports in Baltimore City have been instructed to call Baltimore City 911 where we get to tie up the emergency lines for a call that is most certainly not an emergency. Additionally, it then becomes clear that no effort has been put into educating the public about changes. When we call Baltimore City 911, the dispatchers and their supervisors tell us that they have received no training on this topic. They ask us if we need them to order a wellness check, and we confirm that we do not as that would only cause more harm.
3. **Current guidelines say that mandated reporters are to contact the "local offices."** When it comes to adult survivors, the question becomes **WHERE IS THE LOCAL OFFICE?** Do we call the local office where my office is located? Do I call the office that is local to where my adult client lives? Do I call the local office wherever the abuse occurred? And if so, how exactly will I know which office that is when my adult client is unlikely to spell out the address where the abuse occurred as they don't want this report filed in the first place. If I have to file the report in another state, I will likely call only to be told that this state does not accept adult survivor reports. I'm just wasting my time.

4. **When it comes to adult survivor reporting, we need an actual form, a streamlined system, and clarity on WHERE we are to file.**

**Most importantly, we need a law and system that will respect the rights and wishes of adult survivors.**

# **HB1005.pcb.support.JP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Paul Berman

Position: FAV

**PAUL C. BERMAN, PH.D.**  
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March 31, 2026

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*

Paul C. Berman, Ph.D.  
Licensed Psychologist

# **Sage Testimony, HB1005.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rachel Sage

Position: FAV

**Hello, my name is Rachel Sage, I'm a clinical social worker licensed in Maryland, and I specialize in working with organized extreme abuse, complex trauma and dissociation.**

**The current Adult Survivor law is well intentioned, and blinded by the privilege of safety and belief in idyllic nature of our systems by those who made it. HB1005 is a step toward, not a solution for, improving Adult Survivor reporting in Maryland.**

- Release of Epstein files shows lack of caring for confidentiality and safety for adult survivors by government agencies. This law can exacerbate danger for those abused by people in government positions, police officers, attorneys, CEOs, etc. Reporting to the State's Attorney can feel like a grave violation for clients who are not consenting to have their information shared with law enforcement. What is a clinician to do if a police officer in the district where the clinician is mandated to report was involved in the abuse? Making these reports has caused both me and clients I work with to fear for our own physical safety.**
- The burdensome and cumbersome nature of the reporting requirement for survivors of trafficking, where an adult survivor was abused in multiple states and/or countries, by sometimes hundreds of perpetrators, known and unknown, is an incredible burden to place on the clinician, whose licensure depends on following legal mandates to report each of these abuses, and on the survivor, who is often terrified at the thought of even 1 report being made. It is common in my practice to make multiple CPS reports for the same person, none of which I am aware has been investigated by CPS or the SA office.**
- This law hovers over the therapeutic space and actively interferes with my ability to use highly effective modalities when Adult Survivors feel unable to share what they have endured due to this law.**
- Supervisory CPS staff in Baltimore Country have told me that each Adult Survivor report takes approximately 1hr of CPS' time, which is time not helping children who are presently being abused.**
- We are required to do both verbal and written reports - for non-urgent matters, could a written report suffice? Not all counties have the same reporting system, and not all counties appear to be following the current law. Baltimore City CPS directs these reports to be given to 911. Some counties only accept written reports.**
- We are required to report abuse where the accused perpetrator is deceased and/or currently incarcerated (for these crimes and/or others), which seems unnecessary.**

# **HB1005 Delegate Forbes Senate Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Susan Parts

Position: FAV

CATHI FORBES  
Legislative District 43B  
Baltimore County

Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Education and Economic Development

Chair, Oversight Committee on Pensions



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*The Maryland House of Delegates*  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB 1005**

Child Abuse and Neglect – Reporting – Survivor Reporting Reform Act

Testimony of Delegate Cathi Forbes

Judicial Proceedings

April 2, 2026

***What this bill does***

This bill requires the Department of Human Services to develop a reporting process for mandatory reporters when they are reporting past child abuse from adult survivors.

***What is the problem this bill is trying to address***

Under Maryland’s current mandated reporting requirements, professionals must report suspected incidents of child abuse if suspected abuse is active, and on-going, or it is being reported by an adult survivor of past abuse.

This legislation is meant to deal with reports being made on behalf of adult survivors and was drafted at the suggestion of a group of clinicians who feel the current mandatory reporting for adult survivors can be chilling to their therapeutic relationships, cause additional trauma for survivors, and is fraught with inconsistencies.

When individuals are abused and neglected, their power, control, and autonomy are taken away from them. When adult survivors make the brave decision to seek therapy, they are met with the unfortunate news in their very first session, where they are told that their therapist will have to break confidentiality and file a report if they provide identifiable information about past suspected child abuse or neglect. It doesn’t matter if the person alleged to have done the abuse is dead, or if the survivor doesn’t want to report the incident.

The current mandated reporting requires the same form for reporting, whether the incident is current and happening today, or happened decades ago. [DHR/SSA 180](#) is the form that must be completed. This form does not distinguish between active abuse and past abuse. It asks questions adult survivors may not be able to answer, and awkward things, like “name of the child.” These people are adults.

Mandatory reporters are currently required to do both an oral report, as soon as possible, and written reports within 48 hours. Each county has a different process. Current guidelines say that mandated reporters must contact the “local offices.” When it comes to adult survivors, the question becomes, “Where is the local office?” It is unclear to therapists where to report the alleged abuse of the survivor if it occurred in another state. These therapists must obey the mandatory reporting law, or risk their credentials as Maryland has criminalized mandatory reporters who fail to report abuse.

What we are hoping to do is to have DHS collaborate with the interested persons: survivors, practitioners, local departments, law enforcement, and state’s attorneys to create a reporting system that is more sensitive to survivors, useful to those receiving the information, and provides clarity to the practitioners about where the reports should be filed.

### ***Why you should vote for this bill***

The current system is well-intentioned, as no one wants to allow child abuse to go unreported. The current system is designed for active abuse situations and is unintentionally causing harm to adult survivors of child abuse. On behalf of these adults, and the professionals who care for them, I ask for a favorable report. Thank you.

**Maryland Catholic Conference\_HB 1005\_FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jenny Kraska

Position: FWA



April 2, 2026

**HB 1005 – Business Regulation - Cemeteries - Requirements for Sale or Transfer or Government Acquisition**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**Position: Favorable w/ Amendment**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers testimony in support of House Bill 1005 with amendments. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

We appreciate the bill's intent to create a distinct reporting process for cases in which the individual believed to have been abused or neglected as a child is now an adult. This approach appropriately recognizes that Child Protective Services must prioritize the protection of children currently at risk, while also ensuring that adult survivors have a meaningful avenue to report past abuse and express their preferences regarding investigation.

**Reason for Amendments: Protecting Confidentiality and Avoiding Unintended Burdens on Reporters**

We respectfully request two clarifying amendments to subsection (d)(3)(i). As drafted, the bill requires the reporting form to:

*“include a document **to be given to the individual who is the subject of the report** regarding how the information in the report may be used.”*

Without clarification, this language could be interpreted to mean that the *reporter*—a mandated reporter acting in a professional capacity—must personally provide this document to the adult survivor. That interpretation would be inconsistent with the longstanding confidentiality protections surrounding abuse and neglect reporting. It could:

- Compromise the privacy of both the reporter and the survivor;
- Create confusion or strain in professional or pastoral relationships;
- Discourage reporting out of fear of noncompliance; and

- Be practically impossible in many cases, as the reporter may not have contact information for the adult survivor or may not be in a position to reach out.

The intent of the bill is sound, but the language should clearly indicate that **the Department**, not the reporter, is responsible for providing this informational document to the individual who is the subject of the report.

### **Requested Amendments**

To ensure clarity and preserve confidentiality, we request the following amendments:

#### AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 3, line 17, strike the first instance of “TO” and replace with “THAT MAY”.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 3, line 18, after “REPORT” add “, WHEN PRACTICABLE AND APPROPRIATE,”.

These changes clarify that the Department may provide the informational document to the adult survivor when appropriate—not that the reporter must do so.

### **Conclusion**

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference respectfully urges a **favorable report with the proposed amendments** on HB 1005. These clarifications will strengthen the bill, protect confidentiality, and ensure that the reporting process functions as intended for both survivors and mandated reporters.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report with amendment on HB 1005. Thank you for your time and consideration.