



TESTIMONY FOR HB1005 – Child Abuse and Neglect – Reporting (Survivor Reporting Reform Act) – FAVORABLE

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Forbes
Committee: House Judiciary
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 HB1005 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations representing more than 30,000 Marylanders across every legislative district. Our work is rooted in the belief that government should protect people's lives, health, and dignity, especially in moments of crisis.

HB1005 does exactly that.

This bill requires the Department of Human Services to develop a standardized form for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect in cases where the victim is now an adult. It also requires DHS to consult directly with health practitioners, survivors of abuse, law enforcement, and State's Attorneys in designing the form—ensuring that the reporting process is trauma-informed, accessible, and grounded in real-world experience.

These protections are not theoretical. They are urgently needed.

Adult survivors often carry the weight of childhood abuse for decades before they are ready—or able—to come forward. When they do, they frequently encounter systems that were not designed with their circumstances in mind. Without a clear, consistent reporting mechanism:

- Confusing or inconsistent processes may retraumatize survivors
- Critical information may be lost or never documented
- Law enforcement and prosecutors may lack the details needed to pursue cases
- Patterns of abuse may go undetected, leaving other children at risk
- Agencies may miss opportunities to intervene, support survivors, or prevent future harm

HB1005 closes these gaps by creating a uniform, survivor-centered reporting tool that ensures adult disclosures are taken seriously, documented properly, and routed to the appropriate authorities. The required consultation with survivors and frontline professionals ensures the form reflects lived experience rather than bureaucracy.

This legislation aligns squarely with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. It strengthens public safety, supports survivors, improves accountability, and ensures Maryland's systems respond with compassion and clarity when individuals come forward with deeply painful histories of abuse.

No survivor should be dismissed, retraumatized, or left without a clear path to report what happened to them. HB1005 helps ensure that doesn't happen.

Thank you for your time and consideration. **We respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on HB1005.**