



**BILL NO:** House Bill 491  
**TITLE:** **Criminal Procedure - Victims of Sexually Assaultive Behavior – Request for Verbal Acknowledgement**  
**COMMITTEE:** Judiciary  
**HEARING DATE:** February 10, 2026  
**POSITION:** FAVORABLE

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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 favorable on HB 491.**

House Bill 491 would 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. House Bill 491 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 HB 491.