



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 1406 with Sponsor Amendments
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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 which provides direct legal services for survivors across the State of Maryland. We urge the Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 1406 with Sponsor Amendments

House Bill 1406 – Self Defense by Victims Against Abusers – Work Group

This bill is a result of discussions regarding other legislation seeking to address the needs of survivors of abuse or trafficking post-conviction. While there are important and meaningful aspects of post-conviction relief, there are currently deficiencies in evidence law for cases involving survivors who have been criminally charged with harming their abusers.

Sponsor amendments would turn this bill into a work group to study and develop a plan and legislative recommendations regarding how to update and modernize § 10-916 of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article (Battered Spouse Syndrome) and to determine how trauma-informed evidentiary provisions should be expanded to apply to survivors of sexual assault, child abuse, human trafficking and coercive exploitation. This shall include examination of self defense and partial self defense by survivors of trauma who are criminally charged for acts against their abusers.

MCASA fully supports this approach and looks forward to working with the sponsor and others to address this important issue.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judiciary Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 1406 with Sponsor Amendments**