



TESTIMONY FOR HB0450 – Criminal Procedure – Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking – FAVORABLE

Bill Sponsors: Delegates Guyton, Bagnall, Boyce, Conaway, Embry, Feldmark, Fennell, Foley, Forbes, Harrison, Hornberger, D. Jones, Kaiser, Kaufman, Lehman, Lewis, J. Long, Lopez, Miller, Phillips, Roberts, Rose, Ruth, Schindler, Spiegel, Stein, Stinnett, Taveras, Terrasa, Tomlinson, Watson, White Holland, Wolek, Woods, Woorman, and Wu

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 HB0450 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 mission is simple: to promote laws that protect people, strengthen public safety, and ensure dignity and justice for all Marylanders.

HB0450 is a necessary and commonsense step to protect survivors of sexual assault and stalking from further harm.

This bill ensures that a victim’s identifying information is not disclosed during criminal proceedings without their consent, balancing privacy with transparency. For survivors, privacy is not a technical issue—it is a matter of safety. Public disclosure can expose victims to retaliation, harassment, and ongoing trauma, especially when perpetrators remain a threat or when survivors fear damage to their personal, professional, or family lives.

Too often, the fear of being publicly identified erodes trust, preventing survivors from reporting crimes or participating fully in the justice process. HB0450 removes that barrier. By establishing clear and enforceable confidentiality standards, this bill builds confidence, making it safer for survivors to come forward, cooperate with investigations, and seek accountability.

When survivors feel protected, communities are safer. Crimes are more likely to be reported, and perpetrators are more likely to be held accountable. Trust in the justice system is strengthened, fostering a shared sense of safety and responsibility.

HB0450 also reflects a trauma-informed approach to public safety. Survivors of sexual assault and stalking—particularly women, LGBTQ+ Marylanders, and members of marginalized communities—are disproportionately targeted and often face additional risks when their identities are exposed. Protecting their privacy affirms Maryland’s commitment to fairness, respect, and human dignity for all.

This legislation aligns directly with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. It advances public safety, supports social justice, and recognizes that healing and accountability depend on a system that does not retraumatize those who have already endured significant harm.

Protecting survivors’ identities is not about secrecy but about safeguarding their rights within the legal process. HB0450 ensures that confidentiality measures are implemented with safeguards that uphold due process, reflecting the values of safety, justice, and respect in Maryland’s legal system.

I appreciate your consideration. **We respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on HB0450.**