

Ivan Bates
President



Kirsten N. Brown
Coordinator

Maryland State's Attorneys' Association
3300 North Ridge Road, Suite 185
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043
kbrown@mdsaa.org ~ 301-748-1312

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The Honorable Sandy Bartlett
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Bartlett and Committee Members:

The Maryland State's Attorneys' Association (MSAA) supports (with amendments) House Bill 450—Criminal Procedure—Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking. I am the Chief of the Special Victims' Division for the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office, and co-chair, along with Deputy State's Attorney for Frederick County Joyce King, of the Maryland State's Attorney Association's Special Victims Legislative Committee. In my capacity as the Chief of SVD, I supervise and handle prosecutions related to sexual assault and stalking.

House Bill 450 expands the identity protections set forth in section 11-301 of the Criminal Procedure Article to include identity protection for victims/survivors of sexual assault and stalking. Currently, State's Attorney's Offices can file a motion to seal identity information *after* that information is in the public view (e.g., in a charging document or other court filing). This bill will offer greater protection by protecting this information as a matter of course. This bill does allow the Court to release this information for good cause; therefore, the bill does not set up an absolute bar to release.

In addition, the MSAA supports amending the current bill to distinguish between redacting identifying information and sealing the file in full. This clarification allows the public to view the substance of the charging or other public-facing document without learning the specific identifying information for the victim/survivor.

House Bill 450, with amendment, offers needed protection to victim/survivors of stalking and sexual assault. MSAA urges this Committee to issue a favorable report with amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debbie Feinstein", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Debbie Feinstein
Co-Chair, MSSA Special Victims Subcommittee