



BILL NUMBER: SB 294

TITLE: Criminal Procedure - Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking

COMMITTEE: Judiciary

HEARING DATE: 3/31/2026

POSITION: FAV

TurnAround, Inc. is the designated rape crisis center for Baltimore City and Baltimore County and a comprehensive domestic violence service provider. Core components of the agency's work include crisis response, survivor-centered advocacy, legal referrals, trauma-informed therapy, and community education. TurnAround also serves as the Regional Navigator for Baltimore County and Howard County, providing specialized services to survivors of human trafficking. The organization is a member of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA), the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV), and the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MDHTTF).

Senate Bill 294 would enhance protections for victims of sexual assault and stalking by prohibiting courts and parties in criminal and juvenile delinquency cases from disclosing or allowing inspection of court filings and records that contain identifying information of these victims to nonparties unless that information is first redacted, absent a clear and convincing showing of good cause to do otherwise. The bill builds on Criminal Procedure § 11301 by expanding existing confidentiality protections—currently focused on minor victims—to include alleged victims of sexually assaultive behavior and stalking and by defining “identifying information” to encompass names and any information that could reasonably be expected to identify the victim.

For the survivors we serve, confidentiality is central to both safety and healing. Victims of sexual assault and stalking often fear that involvement in the criminal legal system will expose their names, addresses, workplaces, or other identifying details to the public, making them vulnerable to retaliation, harassment, or ongoing stalking by the person who harmed them. These fears can be especially acute when offenders live or work nearby, share schools or social circles with the victim, or have access through shared children or community institutions.

Our advocates routinely work with survivors who hesitate to report a crime or to remain engaged in a case because they are worried that court records will reveal their identities. In stalking cases, where offenders may use any available information to monitor or threaten a victim, public access to addresses, phone numbers, or other identifying data in court filings can significantly increase

the risk of continued harm. In sexual assault matters, public association of a survivor's name with graphic allegations can invite victim-blaming, stigma, and long-term reputational damage, further discouraging reporting and cooperation with prosecution.

SB 294 offers a balanced, narrowly tailored solution that promotes survivor safety while preserving core principles of due process and transparency. The bill does not interfere with a defendant's ability to obtain discovery or otherwise defend against charges; instead, it focuses on limiting disclosure of identifying information to nonparties and expressly preserves access for the victim and the victim's representative. By requiring a clear and convincing showing of good cause before a court may allow unredacted disclosure, the bill ensures that any departure from confidentiality is carefully justified and subject to judicial oversight.

We are particularly supportive of the provision requiring courts, upon written request of a victim of sexual assault or stalking, to redact identifying information from existing filings or records. Many survivors whose cases are already in the system did not have the benefit of these protections when their matters were filed, yet they continue to live with the fear and consequences of having their identities tied to public records. SB 294 offers a clear, accessible path for those survivors to reclaim some measure of privacy and safety without undermining the integrity of the court record.

By expanding and clarifying confidentiality protections in this way, SB 294 will encourage more survivors to come forward, remain engaged with the justice process, and pursue safety and accountability without having to sacrifice their privacy. This legislation sends a powerful message that Maryland recognizes the unique vulnerabilities of victims of sexual assault and stalking and is committed to safeguarding their identities while they seek justice.

For these reasons, TurnAround, Inc. respectfully urges the Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 294.

For further inquiries, please contact Amanda Rodriguez, Esq., Chief Executive Officer, at arodriguez@turnaroundinc.org.