



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 349
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
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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 (SALI), a statewide legal services provider for survivors of sexual assault. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all of its members working to eliminate sexual violence. We urge the Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 349.

House Bill 349 – Wiretap – Change to Misdemeanor

This bill would reclassify violation of the all party consent law for audio recordings from a felony to a misdemeanor.

Victims of violent crime, including sex crimes, have recorded their assaults in an attempt to document what has occurred. Current law prohibits use of these audio recordings in court proceedings and classifies the victims as felons. This discourages reporting of violent crime. HB349 is a modest step towards reducing the penalty for these crime victims. It also more appropriately responds to this type of recording in an era of ubiquitous cell phones and the ability to record at almost any time.

MCASA notes that there has been discussion of an amendment to expand the statute of limitations for this charge should HB349 be reported favorably. MCASA has no objection to this approach.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judiciary Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 349**