



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

P.O. Box 8782
Silver Spring, MD 20907
Phone: 301-565-2277
Fax: 301-565-3619

For more information contact:
Lisae C. Jordan, Esquire
443-995-5544
mcasa.org

Testimony Supporting House Bill 924 with Amendments
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 924 with Amendments

**House Bill 924 – Child Sexual Abuse Materials
Modernization and Civil Actions**

This bill includes several provisions, including a long overdue modernization of laws regarding child sexual abuse materials (sometimes referred to as child pornography): effectively increasing the maximum age from 16 to 18 of children in the definition of prohibited materials by substituting “minor” for “child” in the code.

Victims portrayed in child sexual abuse materials suffer long lasting and repeated harm. They are sexual abused during the creation of the images, and then these victims experience repeated harm as the pictures of their abuse are circulated. The material travels the web, around the world, and is shared by the sex offenders interested in exploiting children by viewing their sexual abuse. HB924 increases protections for survivors who are minors, including those who were 16 or 17 during the creation of the materials.

Critically, it also creates additional rights to sue those who create and use this material, diminishing their ability to profit from harming minors. In particular, HB924 provides for liability for online platforms participating in intentional and knowing distribution of this material. MCASA supports the intent of holding platforms liable, however, provisions regarding civil remedies should be reviewed and amended to conform to Maryland law and practice. MCASA also recommends clarification to ensure that survivors themselves may pursue remedies and that the bill be amended to provide that negligence is also a sufficient basis for civil recovery. Finally, MCASA also encourages consultation with the Office of the Attorney General regarding provisions authorizing actions in that Office.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judiciary Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 924 with Amendments**