



TESTIMONY FOR SB0685
Local School Systems - Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct - Response Policy
and After-Action Review

Bill Sponsor: Senator Gile

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0685 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Sexual abuse and other sexual harassment behavior happens in our schools. Some schools have plans in place to support the victims, inform the parents and the public, work with law enforcement, and understand/remediate the situation that caused harm. Other schools seem very much surprised and flail when these tragedies happen.

This bill, if enacted, would require the Department of Education to create a model sexual abuse and misconduct response policy that addresses all of the aspects of these tragic incidents. The policy should include –

- a requirement that a parent or guardian receive prompt notification that the student has made a credible allegation of a serious incident
- a communications plan that provides local school systems with the information authorized to be shared with the public at each stage of the response process
- a requirement that notification be provided to the child's parent or guardian as soon as possible and not later than within 3 school days
- record retention requirements and guidelines developed in collaboration with the state archives

There should also be an after-action plan that analyzes why the situation occurred and makes recommendations to remediate or resolve the issues that are identified.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.