

My name is Tina Teufer, and I am the mother of a child who is a survivor of child sexual abuse. I submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 123, introduced by Delegate Mike Griffith, and I urge this body to advance this legislation for the safety, transparency, and protection of all children in our school communities.

I come before you not only as a parent whose family has been forever changed by sexual abuse, but also as an advocate who has worked directly on legislation to protect children. Last year, I helped support and pass legislation aimed at preventing juvenile sex offenders from attending in-person school settings when doing so poses a risk to others. That experience taught me two critical truths: first, that our laws still contain dangerous gaps; and second, that when those gaps exist, children pay the price.

When schools are kept in the dark, they cannot implement safeguards, supervision plans, or protective measures. Silence and secrecy do not protect children; they endanger them.

House Bill 123 addresses a critical failure point in our current system: the absence of consistent safeguards and accountability when it comes to juvenile sexual offenders and school placement. While rehabilitation is important, it cannot come at the expense of unsuspecting children. Safety must be the foundation of any policy decision, especially when the setting involves classrooms, hallways, restrooms, and buses—places where children are entitled to feel safe.

I also submit this testimony as the founder of **Pillars of Hope – The P&K Initiative**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing support, advocacy, and resources to children and families impacted by sexual abuse. Through this work, I have spoken with countless parents who share the same story: they were never informed, never warned, and never given the opportunity to protect their children. Many learned the truth only after harm had already occurred. These are not isolated incidents—they are systemic failures.

House Bill 123 is not about punishment. It is about prevention. It is about transparency. It is about acknowledging that children who have already been victimized should never be placed in situations where the system fails them again. Schools must be empowered with information and clear guidelines so that they can make decisions that prioritize student safety while complying with the law.

As a mother, I live with the knowledge that my child's trauma could have been prevented. As an advocate, I refuse to allow other families to carry that same burden if legislative action can stop it. This bill represents an opportunity to do better—to learn from past failures and to put children first, unequivocally.

I respectfully urge this body to support House Bill 123 and to stand on the side of prevention, accountability, and child safety. Our children deserve schools that are places of learning and protection—not environments where avoidable risks are ignored.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your commitment to protecting Maryland's children.

Respectfully submitted,

**Tina Teufer**

Mother of a Child Sexual Abuse Survivor

Founder, *Pillars of Hope – The P&K Initiative*