



**BILL NUMBER:** SB0043

**TITLE:** Criminal Law - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Sexual Activity

**COMMITTEE:** Judicial Proceedings

**HEARING DATE:** January 21, 2021

**POSITION:** Support

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TurnAround, Inc. respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 0043. This bill would protect the integrity of criminal investigations and the safety of all those involved by prohibiting law enforcement officers from engaging in sexual acts and sexual contact, including intercourse, with a victim, witness, or suspect during an investigation that the officer is conducting, supervising, or assisting with.

TurnAround, Inc. supports and advocates for survivors of sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and human trafficking. In the agency's last fiscal year, approximately half of clients were survivors of sexual violence, with 14% having a history of human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation. These survivors already face significant hurdles to trusting and accessing the criminal justice system, paired with extensive trauma from the violence they have experienced. Law enforcement officers are in a position of power and must be held to the highest standards of professional behavior, integrity, and accountability. To ensure the participation of victims in any legal proceeding related to their case is voluntary and they are not further harmed, law enforcement officers should not engage in sexual acts or sexual contact of any kind with victims or other parties involved in their active investigations. SB 0043 is an important step in protecting victims of trafficking and other sex crimes from coercion and further trauma at the hands of the criminal justice system.

**About TurnAround, Inc** TurnAround, Inc. is the designated rape crisis center for Baltimore City and Baltimore County, and a comprehensive domestic violence center. The agency's mission is to educate, advocate for, and empower all people impacted by intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking. Crisis response, victim-centered advocacy, legal referrals, trauma therapy, and community education are core components of the agency's work. TurnAround is a member of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV).

For further questions, please contact Jean Henningsen, Director of Development and Special Projects at [jhenningsen@turnaroundinc.org](mailto:jhenningsen@turnaroundinc.org) and Angeles Evans, Community Engagement Manager at [aevans@turnaroundinc.org](mailto:aevans@turnaroundinc.org).