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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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Testimony in Support of HB 270 Sexual Assault Survivors

Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice Chair and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee,

HB 270 improves the process that many survivors of sexual assault face when they are informed prosecutors are declining to charge their attackers. According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) 995 of every 1000 sexual assault perpetrators will never face prison. The majority of cases will not be reported and most of the cases that are reported will not lead to arrest or even an attempt at prosecution. Women of color are disproportionately affected by sexual assault and are more likely to not report their attackers.

There are many factors that contribute to sexual assaults not being reported, but the trauma of survivors having to relive their attacks and face police and prosecutor questioning is regularly cited as a major point. This legislation ensures survivors can have a victim's advocate present during any questioning, and also empowers survivors to hold meetings with police and prosecutors on their terms.

With the majority of reported cases of sexual assault never leading to arrests or prosecution, countless survivors face the daunting task of sharing the stories of their attacks to police officers and prosecutors only for prosecutors to decline pressing charges. Considering the prevalence of this, Maryland can make a statement of support for sexual assault survivors by reforming and improving the process that which prosecutors inform a person that they are declining to bring charges against their attacker.

For these reasons, I urge you to support **HB 270**, and I request a favorable report.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young".

Delegate Karen Lewis Young