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**January 25, 2022**

**Support of HB 225 – Criminal Procedure – Victims of Sexually Assaultive Behavior**

The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair  
Judiciary Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 101  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Clippinger, Vice-Chair Moon, and Esteemed Members of the Judiciary Committee:

House Bill 225 improves the process for survivors of sexual assault if and when they are informed prosecutors are declining to charge their attackers. The same bill (House Bill 270 – 2021) passed the Judiciary Committee and House of Delegates last year unanimously; however, it was not voted on in the Senate.

After conversations with a constituent who reported a sexual assault, I drafted this legislation. The State's Attorney initially chose not to file charges and did not contact the survivor with an explanation. Under this legislation, the survivor has the right to request a meeting with an Assistant State's Attorney (ASA) with knowledge of the case. That meeting is required to occur within twenty days of the request, at which time the ASA can explain why the office did not move forward and answer questions of the survivor.

According to the U.S. Justice Department, only 23% of survivors report their assault, and only 20% of those reports lead to charges. Some survivors report hearing nothing after filing charges against their assailant. The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) report that 995 of every 1000 sexual assault perpetrators will never face prison.

Women of color and LGBTQ+ people are disproportionately affected by sexual assault and are less likely to report their attackers. 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.

Maryland can make a statement of support for sexual assault survivors by reforming and improving this process. For these reasons, I urge you to support HB 225, and I request a favorable report.

Thank you,

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

Delegate Karen Lewis Young