



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 84 with Sunset Clause
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
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The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is a non-profit membership organization that includes the State's seventeen rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI), a statewide legal services provider for survivors of sexual assault. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all of its members working to eliminate sexual violence. We urge the Ways and Means Committee to report favorably on House Bill 84 with a sunset clause.

House Bill 376 – NIMBL Loan Fund - Funding

This bill would mandate funding for the NIMBL program providing loans to nonprofits when government agencies administering grants fail to disburse grant funds in a timely manner. With some reluctance, the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault supported the expansion of the NIMBL program last session. It is a work-around for government's inability to manage grant funds and should not be necessary. However, it is necessary and must be funded in order to be effective.

Nonprofit rape crisis centers around the state report delays receiving reimbursement for services provided to survivors of sexual assault. Some grants are reimbursed on a quarterly basis, meaning that community based non-profits are fronting funds for four or more months before being reimbursed. For example, reimbursement for salary paid the first week of January could not be requested until the close of the quarter, March 30th. It is not unusual for the State to take another 30-40 days to then provide the funds. Contrast this with the federal government, which not only provides reimbursement for funds expended within a matter of a 2 or 3 days, it also permits grantees to request funds that will be expended in the following 10 days. For example, a grantee with payroll on Friday could request needed funds today because the funds would be expended within 10 days.

In any event, the state is not providing funds promptly, so mandatory allocations for the NIMBL fund would help programs meet payroll, pay rent, and otherwise meet financial obligations. MCASA respectfully suggests that the legislature include a sunset clause in fervent hope that the government will start actually paying providers on time and fix the broken grant reimbursement system.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
urges the Ways & Means Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 84**