



MARYLAND HOUSE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

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March 13, 2018

Minority Leader

Delegate Nicholas R. Kipke, District 31

Minority Whip

Delegate Kathy Szeliga, District 7

The Honorable Joseph F. Vallario, Jr., Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
6 Bladen Street, Suite 101
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Vallario:

As the cross-over deadline draws near, we write today with the utmost urgency, to implore you to allow a vote on legislation that will protect our communities from sexual predators.

House Bill 301 – Courts – Evidence of Sexually Assaultive Behavior – Admissibility (Repeat Sexual Predator Prevention Act of 2018) and House Bill 353 – Courts – Evidence of Sexually Assaultive Behavior – Admissibility (Repeat Sexual Predator Prevention Act) both received hearings more than a month ago, yet neither has been brought to a vote in the Judiciary Committee. Both pieces of legislation will allow a court to admit evidence of a defendant's prior history of sexual crimes or abuse during prosecution for subsequent sexual offenses.

These bills, along with their Senate cross-files, have more than 120 members of the General Assembly as co-sponsors, indicating widespread bipartisan support for this policy. This legislation has come before the House Judiciary Committee 14 times. It has only come close to passage once. In 2016 the bill passed unanimously in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and went on to pass unanimously in the Senate. It died in the House of Delegates. How much longer do our citizens have to wait for the protection this bill will give them; protection from the vilest predators in our society?

In the fourteen years that this bill has been before the House Judiciary Committee there have been countless crimes committed by sexual predators, and countless victims who have suffered and in some cases died at the hands of sexual predators. How many of these crimes could have been prevented? How many lives saved? We will never know.

But, we know with certainty that time for delay is over. The time to pass this legislation is now.

As much as we respect the committee system within the legislature, the safety of our children and our communities is far more precious than parliamentary niceties. Should this legislation not receive a Committee vote and get sent to the floor by March 16th, we will petition the legislation from the possession of the House Judiciary Committee. This is not intended as an ultimatum, and we do not take this action lightly, but we feel this move underscores our commitment to seeing this legislation passed and our communities protected.

The importance of this legislation transcends politics or ego. It does not matter to us which bill ultimately moves, as long as we leave Annapolis having protected our children and communities from sexual predators. *That* is a legacy worth leaving.

We appreciate your timely attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Nic Kipke
Minority Leader



Kathy Szeliga
Minority Whip