



Celebrating 50 Years of Advancing Justice

Listen. Engage. Advocate

Dear friend of the WLC,

[HB153/SB33 Criminal Law - Sexual Crimes - Fourth-Degree Sexual Offense and Spousal Defense](#) is one of the bills the Women's Law Center supports this year. We need your help in the last hours of the legislative session to pass this important bill. **Calls are needed NOW to your Senator urging them to support the *House version* of this bill.**

The Maryland State's Attorneys Association and the Maryland Office of the Attorney General both oppose the Senate amendments to the bill to repeal marriage as a defense to sex crimes.

The [Office of the Attorney General](#) expresses these concerns: *"Logistically, this amendment is problematic because it requires the fact-finder to determine what 'physical contact [is] commonly engaged in by two individuals in a sexual relationship.' What is considered common physical contact is unique to each relationship. It also asks the fact-finder to decide how a person 'reasonably indicates' that physical contact is unwanted. It also creates a question of what constitutes an 'ongoing consensual sexual relationship,' particularly in circumstances where the parties were in the process of separating."*

The [Maryland State's Attorneys Association](#) says: *"The proposed amendment creates a vague and unnecessary exception to the crime of sexual assault for individuals engaged in a prior sexual relationship. The fact that someone is in a relationship should not obviate consent under any circumstance. The amendment is out of synch with our modern understanding of consent and should be eliminated.*

Moreover, the language of the proposed amendment is vague and subject to multiple interpretations. What constitutes an 'ongoing sexual relationship?' How do we define the meaning of 'physical contact commonly engaged in by two individuals?' And lastly, what is a 'reasonable indicat[ion]' that physical contact is 'unwanted.'"

Please call your State Senator now and urge them to support the HOUSE VERSION of HB153/SB33. You can look up who represents you in the Senate [here](#). (Click on the *Look Up* tab.) As always, thank you for your activism!

Onward,

The WLC Advocacy Team

P.S. As always, if you appreciate the work we do, whether in the General Assembly or through our [direct legal services](#) across the State, [give here!](#) And if this email was forwarded to you by a friend, make sure to sign up for our legislative alerts [here!](#)

P.P.S. Save the Date for the WLC's 50th Anniversary Celebration and Awards Ceremony on May 19th, 6pm, at Live! Casino & Hotel! Join us in presenting the 50th Anniversary Legacy of Leadership Award to The Honorable Mary Ellen Barbera, Chief Judge (Ret.), Court of Appeals of Maryland; the 50th Anniversary Power of the Present Award to The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker, The Maryland House of Delegates; and the 50th Anniversary Foundation of the Future Award, to Susan Francis, Executive Director, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service. For more information or to buy tickets, click [HERE](#).

GIVE TODAY

[Sponsorships and tickets now available for our 50th Anniversary Celebration & Awards Ceremony!](#)

The vision of the Women's Law Center of Maryland is a legal system that provides justice and fairness for women. The Women's Law Center's mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and autonomy of women throughout the State. We work towards this goal by providing direct legal representation, information and referral services, and legislative advocacy.

Our efforts to promote justice, fairness, and equality for women are only possible because of friends like you.

[Give Today](#)

The Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc. is a charitable organization designated as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). A copy of our financial statement is available upon request. Documents and information submitted under the State of Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State of Maryland, Annapolis, MD 21401 for the cost of copying and postage.

