



National Children's Alliance  
516 C Street NE  
Washington DC 20002  
202 548 0090 telephone  
202 548 0099 facsimile

March 7, 2016

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair  
The Honorable Tawanna P. Gaines, Vice Chair  
Appropriations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 121  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Gaines, and Members of the Committees,

On behalf of National Children's Alliance, the Maryland Children's Alliance, and the 17 Maryland Children's Advocacy Centers serving victims of child abuse and child sex trafficking, I would like to thank you for introducing H.B 1490, the *Public Safety - Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Fund - Establishment (Alicia's Law)*. This bill will not only create a dedicated funding stream for Internet Crime Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces in Maryland, but it also sets-aside 25% of this new fund for Maryland CACs to assist ICACs in combatting online child exploitation. At our CACs, we see first-hand the importance of ICACs, and we value our partnerships with these task forces. Thus, we wholeheartedly support H.B. 1490 and urge the bill's swift passage.

National Children's Alliance is the member-accrediting body for Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs). CACs are child-focused facilities in which multidisciplinary teams of law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors, medical professionals, mental healthcare providers, and victim advocates coordinate their efforts to investigate and treat child abuse, while also holding offenders accountable. These centers provide forensic interviews, medical evaluations, trauma-focused mental healthcare and victim advocacy for victims of child abuse and child sexual exploitation. Last year, CACs served more than 311,000 child abuse and trafficking victims, and provided child abuse prevention education to more than 1.8 million individuals in the U.S. alone.

Because CACs have been on the front lines in intervening and preventing child abuse and child exploitation for more than 25 years, we agree with you that a bill like H.B. 1490 is needed to arm local jurisdictions with the resources necessary to combat the horrible crime of online child exploitation. Sadly, no law will ever completely eliminate the crime of child abuse; but establishing a dedicated funding stream for Maryland ICACs and their

CAC partners will provide yet another critical layer of protection for our children and communities.

Child sexual abuse is a far too common experience for America's children. And, child sexual abuse is preventable. It is for this reason that we support H.B. 1490 and urge swift passage.

Thank you again for introducing this critical legislation. You are a true leader in protecting and defending children and victims of abuse

Sincerely,

Teresa Huizar  
Executive Director  
National Children's Alliance