
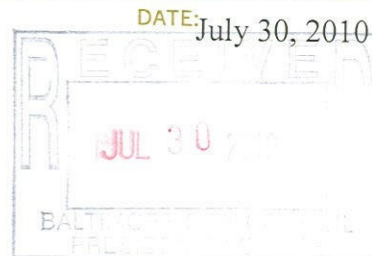


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Elizabeth Embry, Deputy Director	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 10-0217R – Investigative Hearing – Dismissal of Rape Cases		

TO

The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
Attn: Karen Randle, Executive Secretary
Room 409, City Hall
100 North Holiday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202



Re: City Council Bill 10-0217R – Investigative Hearing – Dismissal of Rape Cases

Dear President and City Council Members:

This Council Resolution asks the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice with the Baltimore Police Department and State's Attorney's Office for Baltimore City to explain the high percentage of unfounded rape complaints and to discuss what is needed to ensure that investigations of rape are conforming to the highest standards.

A review of Baltimore's sexual assault crime statistics by the *Baltimore Sun* shed light on a troubling divergence between Baltimore rape statistics and national averages with regard to the number of rapes reported as well as the number of reported rape cases determined to be unfounded. In 2009, approximately 31% of rapes reported in Baltimore were deemed unfounded, which is five times the national average as reported by the FBI. Additionally, FBI data shows that the number of rapes in Baltimore decreased by 80% from 1995 to 2009, at a pace far in excess of the national average of 8% during the same time period. Also of concern is the fact that four of ten emergency calls to police involving allegations of rape never make it to detectives for investigation because responding officers determine there is no need for further action.

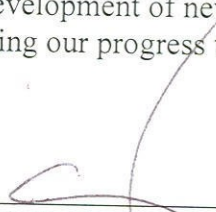
In response to these troubling reports, the Mayor tasked the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice to take a leadership role with the Sexual Assault Review Team (SART), which is composed of medical, advocacy and law enforcement experts in the area of sexual assault, to oversee the development and implementation of improved Police Department practices. The SART is charged with developing an action plan to include an audit of unfounded cases and implementation of best practices for the Police Department and its partner agencies. Additionally, the Mayor and Police Commissioner set up a new hotline for victims of rape and sexual assault to report past incidents or mistreatment that may have occurred while reporting a crime of sexual assault and be connected with appropriate services.

On July 8th, 2010, Baltimore City's SART held a special meeting that included the Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice and the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) in order to develop an action plan to address mishandled sexual assault cases

Comments

and underreporting. At this meeting, the SART initiated planning for the audit that will be conducted of unfounded rape cases from the beginning of 2009 through the end of June 2010 and any case that a victim has requested reopened, to determine whether any of those cases should be reopened. It was also decided to apply jointly for grant funds to support the best practices recommended by the team including a victim advocate to work directly with the police, a multi-agency case management system, and a SART coordinator who can assist the team in ongoing review. The SART met again on July 27th to finalize the details of the action plan and timeline and approve the submission of the grant. The SART will continue to meet on an expedited basis throughout the audit period and implementation of best practices.

It is imperative that victims of sexual violence have confidence that in coming forward they and their cases will be treated with the respect and professionalism they deserve. As we continue the audit process and development of new procedures based on national best practices, we look forward to reporting our progress to this body.



Elizabeth Embry
Deputy Director (Acting Director)
Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

cc: Angela Gibson, Mayor's Legislative Liaison