

JOHNNY RAY SALLING
Legislative District 6
Baltimore County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Public Safety, Transportation,
and Environment Subcommittee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senator William C. Smith, Jr.
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I express my gratitude to the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee for permitting me to address Senate Bill 355 Criminal law – Display of obscene Material to Minors - Prohibition, also cross-filed as HB671 with Delegate Robin Grammer.

This bill expands current law by revising the definition of "item" in relation to the prohibition of displaying or distributing obscene material to minors. It prohibits certain public schools from displaying obscene material and includes "drawing" and "illustration" in the definition of "illicit sex." Additionally, it designates "public schools" as a location for the distribution of such content and recognizes "school principals" as individuals with managerial responsibility. The bill also updates terminology, replacing "place of business" with "premises" and adjusting language to include public school libraries.

Our school serves as a crucial institution for the education, growth, and development of our children. Creating a safe and supportive learning environment is paramount to their overall well-being. Unfortunately, the accessibility of pornographic content within the school setting poses several risks and potential harms. Schools are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that educational content is age appropriate. The presence of explicit material accessible to students contradicts these standards and may expose them to content that is not suitable for their age group.

Schools are expected to uphold legal and ethical standards, and the presence of explicit content in the school environment may raise legal concerns and pose ethical challenges for the institution. Parents entrust schools with the education and safety of their children. The presence of inappropriate content may erode this trust, leading to concerns among parents about the safety of their children within the school environment.

I appreciate the challenges that schools face in balancing access to information with the need to maintain a safe and secure learning environment. By proactively addressing this issue, we can collectively work towards ensuring the well-being and development of our students.

It is crucial to pass this bill to establish an additional protective barrier for children, ensuring they cannot access age-inappropriate material that may harm their development. I appreciate your time and the opportunity to testify on this matter, and I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 355.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Johnny Ray Salling". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Senator Johnny Ray Salling