



www.marylandwomen.org

Maryland Commission for Women

A Commission of the Maryland Department of Human Services

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www.marylandwomen.org

January 19, 2024

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The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair
The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett, Vice Chair
House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building Room 101
Annapolis, MD 21401 – 1991

Re: HB0099 –Criminal Law-Sexual Solicitation of a Minor Through Child Pornography

Dear Delegates Clippinger and Bartlett and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland Commission for Women (MCW) urges your support of HB 99, which would prohibit solicitations of minors to engage in various sexual acts as further detailed in the bill. The MCW believes that this legislation would help protect all children and particularly vulnerable girls.

The MCW was established in 1965 and was set in state law in 1971. An office of the Department of Human Services, the Commission is a 25-member advisory board whose duties outlined in its enabling legislation include: study the status of women in our state, recommend methods of overcoming discrimination, recognize women's accomplishments and contributions, and provide informed advice to the executive and legislative branches of government on the issues concerning the women of our state. It is to fulfill this mandate that the Commission writes to you today.

Online solicitations of minors is of great concern to the MCW. As reported in https://www.justice.gov/d9/2023-06/child_sexual_abuse_material_2.pdf:

- Children are being exposed to solicitation pressures at younger ages.
- On-line interactions have different boundaries than in-person interactions.
- There are obstacles, including shaming of victims, that prevent children from seeking help.

In our view, Law Enforcement needs additional tools to address these concerns and this societal problem of sexual solicitation of minors. HB 99 would provide Law Enforcement with needed additional tools. We strongly urge your support of HB 99.

With very best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tawanda A. Bailey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Tawanda A. Bailey, Chair
Maryland Commission for Women

(The positions expressed in this letter are those of the Commission for Women and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Governor or the Department of Human Services.)