



Maryland Youth Advisory Council

c/o Governor's Office Children
100 Community Place,
Crownsville, MD 21032

Alex Hossainkhail, *Chair*

Thomas Evans, *Vice-Chair*
Folashade Epebinu, *Secretary*

March 25, 2025

Re: HB5 | Criminal Law - Child Sexual Abuse Material - Artificial Intelligence Software

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council prides itself on being a coalition of diverse young advocates and leaders who serve as a voice for youth in the state of Maryland. As leaders in our communities, and as appointees of the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Maryland Association of Student Councils, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the University System of Maryland, we take every opportunity to address relevant issues by influencing legislation, spreading public awareness and serving as a liaison between youth and policymakers regarding issues facing youth.

HB5 strengthens Maryland's laws against child exploitation by explicitly including artificial intelligence (AI)-generated images under the definition of child pornography. AI-generated images that are indistinguishable from real photographs pose a serious threat. While they may not involve a physical child in the traditional sense, these fabricated images perpetuate the harmful demand for child sexual abuse material. They normalize the exploitation of children and create a disturbing market that fuels predatory behavior.

HB5 makes a critical distinction by including AI-generated content within the legal framework of child pornography laws. This addition will empower law enforcement to prosecute individuals who produce, distribute, or possess these harmful materials. Importantly, it addresses a loophole that offenders could otherwise exploit. This legislation sends a clear message that Maryland prioritizes the safety and well-being of its children. By enacting this bill, we are acknowledging the psychological and societal harm caused by these images and taking decisive action to prevent further exploitation. For these reasons, we request a favorable report on **HB5** from the committee.

Sincerely,

Alex Hossainkhail
Maryland Youth Advisory Council