



Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.

Continuing the Missions of the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation, Inc.

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## LETTER IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 221

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On behalf of the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center (MCVRC), I write to express our strong support for Senate Bill 221. MCVRC provides legal services for crime victims throughout Maryland and is the largest nonprofit of its kind in the country. We write on behalf of our clients and family members who have suffered at the hands of offenders who collect child pornography.

Senate Bill 221 elevates the possession of large quantities of child pornography from a misdemeanor to a felony offense. This legislation allows for justice in the most egregious of possession cases.

Each image or video depicting a child's sexual abuse is a permanent record of devastating harm. The children shown in these materials are real victims whose trauma is continually renewed every time those images are shared or viewed. Our clients live with the knowledge that strangers are consuming and trading visual evidence of their childhood abuse. The harm and recurring re-victimization cannot be overstated.

When individuals possess a hundred or more of such images, that conduct reflects not a momentary lapse but a deep participation in an exploitative marketplace. Treating such behavior as a misdemeanor undercuts the severity of the offense and does nothing to stop those who keep these illegal materials in circulation. The proposed creation of a felony possession offense better aligns the law with the gravity of the crime and the magnitude of harm inflicted.

Passing Senate Bill 221 would ensure that judges have the authority to impose appropriate sentences for these large possession cases and would send a clear message that Maryland protects the dignity and safety of children. Senate Bill 221 is a big step towards meaningful consequences that protect victims and communities.

Enabling courts to issue penalties proportionate to the harm caused advances justice for all. On behalf of Maryland victims, we ask you to pass Senate Bill 221.

Sincerely,

Laura Corbett Wilt, Senior Supervising Attorney  
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Joined by: Joanna Mupanduki, Deputy Director & Kurt Wolfgang, Executive Director