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# **Maryland Commission for Women**

51 Monroe Street, Suite. 1034 Rockville, Maryland 20850

**Senate Bill 81** Criminal Law - School Resource Officers - Prohibition on Sexual Activity with Students

**Sponsor:** Senator William G. Folden

**Hearing Date:** January 27, 2026

**Position:** FAVORABLE

The Maryland Commission for Women is pleased to submit testimony in support of SB 81, which closes a loophole that excludes school resource officers (SROs) from sexual offense statutes. The Commission supports efforts to protect students from sexual exploitation in schools and recognizes the importance of addressing power imbalances in educational settings. We thank Senator Folden for introducing this legislation.

Sexual exploitation by adults in positions of authority disproportionately affects girls and other vulnerable students in Maryland schools. Current law does not explicitly cover school resource officers (SROs), leaving gaps that can allow sexual abuse to go unaddressed.

By prohibiting sexual conduct between SROs and students under their supervision, SB 81 directly addresses this gap and recognizes the duty of care and authority SROs hold. This legislation will strengthen trust and safety in schools and provide clearer protections for minors.

The Maryland Commission for Women urges the committee to issue a favorable report on this piece of legislation. Protecting students from sexual exploitation is not only a matter of law enforcement, but it is also a matter of safety, equity, and justice for Maryland's youth.

Maryland Commission for Women Executive Director Ariana Kelly is available to answer any further questions at

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