

HOUSE BILL 672

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CF SB 382

By: **Delegates Grammer, Arikan, Chisholm, Fisher, Kipke, M. Morgan, Nawrocki, and Szeliga**

Introduced and read first time: January 25, 2024

Assigned to: Economic Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Criminal Law – Display of Obscene Materials to Minors – Age Verification**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring a website operator or other person who displays, exhibits,
4 sells, shows, or advertises for sale obscene material to adhere to certain age
5 verification standards; and generally relating to the display of obscene material to
6 minors.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

8 Article – Criminal Law

9 Section 11–203

10 Annotated Code of Maryland

11 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

12 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

13 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

14 **Article – Criminal Law**

15 11–203.

16 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

17 (2) “Distribute” includes to rent.

18 (3) “Illicit sex” means:

19 (i) human genitals in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal;

20 (ii) acts of human masturbation, sexual intercourse, or sodomy; or

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (iii) fondling or other erotic touching of human genitals.

2 (4) "Item" means a:

3 (i) still picture or photograph;

4 (ii) book, pocket book, pamphlet, or magazine;

5 (iii) videodisc, videotape, video game, film, or computer disc; or

6 (iv) recorded telephone message.

7 (5) "Obscene" means:

8 (i) that the average adult applying contemporary community
9 standards would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest;

10 (ii) that the work depicts sexual conduct specified in subsection (b)
11 of this section in a way that is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult
12 community as a whole with respect to what is suitable material; and

13 (iii) that the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious artistic,
14 educational, literary, political, or scientific value.

15 (6) "Partially nude figure" means a figure with:

16 (i) less than completely and opaquely covered human genitals, pubic
17 region, buttocks, or female breast below a point immediately above the top of the areola; or

18 (ii) human male genitals in a discernibly turgid state, even if
19 completely and opaquely covered.

20 (b) (1) A person may not willfully or knowingly display or exhibit to a minor
21 an item:

22 (i) the cover or content of which is principally made up of an obscene
23 description or depiction of illicit sex; or

24 (ii) that consists of an obscene picture of a nude or partially nude
25 figure.

26 (2) A person may not willfully or knowingly engage in the business of
27 displaying, exhibiting, selling, showing, advertising for sale, or distributing to a minor an
28 item:

29 (i) the cover or content of which is principally made up of an obscene
30 description or depiction of illicit sex; or

1 (ii) that consists of an obscene picture of a nude or partially nude
2 figure.

3 (3) If a newsstand or other place of business is frequented by minors, the
4 owner, operator, franchisee, manager, or an employee with managerial responsibility may
5 not openly and knowingly display at the place of business an item whose sale, display,
6 exhibition, showing, or advertising is prohibited by paragraph (2) of this subsection.

7 (c) **A WEBSITE OPERATOR OR OTHER PERSON WHO DISPLAYS, EXHIBITS,**
8 **SELLS, SHOWS, OR ADVERTISES FOR SALE AN ITEM DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION**
9 **(B)(1) OR (2) OF THIS SECTION SHALL ADHERE TO THE LATEST VERSION OF:**

10 **(1) THE INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS**
11 **2089.1 AGE VERIFICATION STANDARD; OR**

12 **(2) THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION**
13 **PRELIMINARY WORK ITEM 7732 AGE VERIFICATION STANDARD.**

14 (D) The provision of services or facilities by a telephone company under a tariff
15 approved by the Public Service Commission is not a violation of subsection (b) of this section
16 relating to recorded telephone messages.

17 [(d)] (E) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on
18 conviction is subject to:

19 (1) for a first violation, imprisonment not exceeding 1 year or a fine not
20 exceeding \$1,000 or both; and

21 (2) for each subsequent violation, imprisonment not exceeding 3 years or a
22 fine not exceeding \$5,000 or both.

23 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
24 October 1, 2024.