

# Mid Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition

5788 Endless Ocean Way, Columbia Maryland 21045

From: Mid Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition

To: Chair William Smith Jr.

Re: Senate Bill 231

Sexual Solicitation of a Minor-Solicitation Through Parent, Guardian, or Custodian-Prohibition and Penalties

Date: January 30, 2020

The Mid-Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. is in Favor of SB 231

We represent the Mid Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition (Prevent Abuse and Neglect through Dental Awareness). We were established in 2000, our mission is “To create an atmosphere of understanding in dentistry and other professional communities which will result in the prevention of abuse and neglect through early identification and appropriate intervention for those who have been abused or neglected.” Dentists and Dental Hygienists (Dental Professionals) are mandated by the State of Maryland to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect. Our coalition has established a Continuing Education (CE) course that educates Dental Professionals and other how to recognize, report, or refer. The Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners has deemed this course as a mandatory CE requirement for Dentists and Hygienists to renew their licenses. We also address domestic violence, elder abuse and human trafficking in our CE course.

This bill will help to protect a child from a parental perpetrator, guardian or custodian of a minor from consenting to allowing their child to engage in prohibited sexual acts with an adult. Children should be taught what is right and not put them in harm’s way, giving them the false impression that this is appropriate behavior. People need to be held accountable for their actions toward minors, especially those that a child should be able to trust. Penalties need to be in place to protect these children. It is our responsibility to try to create a healthy environment.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 231 and be urge your support of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Mid-Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition

Carol Caiazza, RDH President

Susan Camardese, RDH, MS, Vice President