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Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees
Estates and Trusts

Government Operations and
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SUPPORT HB 1211

Criminal Law – Visual Surveillance in a Private Place or of a Private Area

Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB 1211.

This bill prohibits individuals who rent their privately owned properties from monitoring renters with hidden cameras without their permission or knowledge.

Numerous accounts of individuals have been reported over the past few years of incidents where renters have discovered hidden cameras in various areas of the homes or rooms they have rented via private individuals through places such as Airbnb and VRBO. You have two such stories that have been submitted for your review, although a basic Google search will provide many additional accounts of similar incidents.

Airbnb and VBRO, the two largest such companies, state it is against their “policy” to do this, however complaints and enforcement is not a consumer friendly process.

This bill will align these kinds of short term rentals in private homes with the same rules and penalties as hotels and motels. It will retain the existing classification of and penalties for an offense which is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for up to one year and/or a maximum fine of \$2,500.

This is a valuable and evolving industry and our laws should fold these rentals into the current law governing hotels and motels so people can preserve their privacy.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report.

Delegate April Rose