



**Maryland | Delaware | DC Press Association**

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To: Ways & Means Committee

From: Rebecca Snyder, Executive Director, MDDC Press Association

Date: February 6, 2019

Re: **HB 198 – Support with Amendment**

The Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Press Association represents a diverse membership of media organizations, from large metro dailies such as the Washington Post and the Baltimore Sun, to publications such as The Daily Record and online only outlets such as Maryland Matters and Baltimore Brew.

The Press Association recognizes the importance of fair elections to our democracy and the devastating effects when online platforms are used to disseminate “deep fake” material. Reporting on deep fake videos and other newsworthy campaign coverage is critical to our mission to inform the public. We ask that the bill be amended to clarify that our news media members will not be held responsible for posting such material as part of a news coverage or story. We believe this can be accomplished by amending 13-401.1. (D) to read:

“(D) THIS SECTION DOES NOT REQUIRE ~~SERVICE PROVIDERS OR~~ ONLINE PLATFORMS, INCLUDING WEB HOSTING AND INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS, TO ENSURE THAT PERSONS PUBLISHING, DISTRIBUTING OR DISSEMINATING CAMPAIGN MATERIAL COMPLY WITH SS 13-401 OR SS 13-403 OF THIS SUBTITLE.”

Transparency is important to democracy’s function and an informed public is critical to society’s success. We believe this change will allow our members to report on deep fake campaign material without the threat of legal action.



**We believe a strong news media is central to a strong and open society.**

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