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Chairman Clippinger and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

Child Sexual Abuse is often difficult to quantify due to the grooming and secret nature of these crimes. Studies have found that approximately 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys are victims of child sexual abuse. With children between the ages of 7 and 13 being the most vulnerable.<sup>i</sup> Additionally, 3 out of 4 children were victimized by someone they knew well.<sup>ii</sup> This legislation aims to fix a dangerous loophole and protect our most vulnerable victims.

Currently, Sexual Abuse of a Minor (a crime committed by a parent, family member, household member, or a person who has care and custody of a minor) is only considered a crime of violence if the victim is 12 or under. If a victim is 13, 14 or 15, Maryland does not consider Sexual Abuse of a Minor a crime of violence. This means that an adult uncle who sexually abuses his 13-year-old niece and receives a 10 year sentence would be eligible for parole after serving just two and a half years. How can this victim, or her family even begin to think that is a just result for the crimes committed?

This legislation also makes the necessary changes to the Lifetime Supervision statute to mirror the above change and provide parity between second degree sexual offense and second degree rape. In 2017, the Maryland General Assembly determined that there was no difference between second degree sexual offense and second degree rape, however this statute was omitted when the laws were changed, and still reflects a difference between the two crimes, which I do not believe was the intent of this legislative body. Anal penetration, fellatio and cunnilingus should be treated the same, and provided the same protections as vaginal penetration.

**We have a duty to protect children**, this bill will help us better fulfil our obligations to our most vulnerable citizens. I urge a favorable report of Senate Bill 68.

**Jaymi K. Sterling**  
Assistant State's Attorney  
for Anne Arundel County

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<sup>i</sup> <https://victimsofcrime.org/child-sexual-abuse-statistics/>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/194972.pdf>