

# Maryland Coalition Against Pornography, Inc.

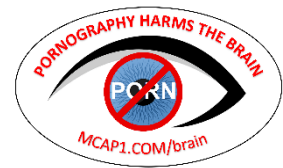
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TOGETHER WE CARE

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## **In support of SB 226**

MCAP thanks Senator Salling for proposing additional language to Section 11–208 of the MD Criminal Code, at line 5 of the bill, quote: ...KNOWINGLY OR INTENTIONALLY ACCESS WITH INTENT TO VIEW... which would provide needed and specific extrapolation of the intent of our law to protect minors in today's digital realm. Currently the code language specifies that the perpetrator **retain or possess** the media/visual representations in order for there to be prosecution. However, technology in this age has enabled livestreaming, or shall we compare it to Netflix or Zoom meetings, of sexual exploitation, where consumers can watch children who have been or are actively being sexually abused, sometimes tailor-made to audio instructions from the viewer. The images are not downloaded or retained onto the viewer's device, so there is no long-lasting trail of digital evidence on the computer, tablet or smartphone that investigators can delve into. Yet the abuse is occurring, in ways more horrific than ever, and we need to provide investigators and prosecutors a legal avenue to pursue and press charges.

For more details on the history and variety of technology behind such crimes, we recommend [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cybersex\\_trafficking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cybersex_trafficking) to aid in understanding the history and permutations involved in this crime. To show how early this kind of crime started getting media attention, see footnote no. 104, which mentions webcam rape, back in 2009.

Statistics on the magnitude of cybersex trafficking are elusive, as it is hard to detect, but it is a billion-dollar industry, with millions of reports to authorities annually, and surging due to globalization and technology advancement, so much encrypted now. In 2021 alone, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received nearly 85 **million** images, videos, and other files containing or related to child sexual abuse and exploitation and other incident-related content – and those are only what were detected and reported. Another aspect is its **shockingly low cost**. E.g., the Australian Institute of Criminology found a median of Australian \$51 being paid by sex offenders, equivalent of just over £27, per abusive livestream. Behind every livestream is a real child, suffering real trauma - often for years on end while the livestreamed abuse goes unreported and unprosecuted. Many child victims are left with serious emotional and physical trauma, often complex.

MCAP believes this bill moves our Maryland laws a significant step in the right direction to help recognize these extreme wrongs and aid law enforcement in its efforts to pursue righting them.

Respectfully submitted,  
Peggy Cairns