

House Judiciary Committee

February 13, 2022

Room 101

House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 600 (Lopez) Nonconsensual sexual imagery taskforce – SPONSOR / SUPPORT

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

Bumble is pleased to sponsor HB 600 which would establish a taskforce to evaluate how to prevent and respond to nonconsensual sexual imagery, also known as ‘cyberflashing’, while respecting First Amendment rights and make recommendations for legislation to address the conduct evaluated.

Bumble was founded on the importance of equitable relationships and how crucial they are to a healthy, happy life. On Bumble, women make the first move. People from all over the world use our product each day – including in Maryland – and we’re more dedicated than ever to our mission to encourage kindness, accountability, equality, and respect through kind connections.

Everyone should feel safe online, but data shows that many individuals don’t, especially women. In a recent user safety survey, we found that close to four in five women respondents on Bumble believe that the sending of unwanted lewd content is unacceptable. Close to two-thirds of women using Bumble believe that sending lewd photos online is as offensive as flashing people in the street; this rises to just short of three-quarters of women users belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community. The experience of receiving this content isn’t momentary or fleeting: members claim to have been left feeling violated, less trusting of others online, and more vulnerable when using the Internet.

This behavior is not just occurring on dating apps and social networks. These images and videos are sent via text, email, and direct message, and are even “AirDropped” in public places. At Bumble, we use state-of-the-art technology to detect such photos and warn recipients in advance – but these steps do nothing to prohibit those users from behaving badly anywhere else online. Tech companies can only do so much to curb this abhorrent behavior. We’re counting on our lawmakers to fill the gaps where our best efforts fall short.

HB 600 aims to research this problem head-on, ensuring we explore how the law can act as a deterrent and a reminder that if it’s not okay in person, it shouldn’t be tolerated

digitally. The aim is not to curtail free expression, and we in no way want to stifle communication between consenting adults. Standards of acceptable behavior online should match those in real life.

For all these reasons, I respectfully urge your "AYE" vote on HB 600.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Payton Itheme". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Payton Itheme

VP of Public Policy

Bumble Inc.