

Committees: Judiciary

Testimony on: HB600 - Task Force on Preventing and Responding to Nonconsensual Sexual Imagery

Position: Favorable

14 February 2023

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and the members of the Judiciary Committee,

The University of Maryland – College Park, Student Government Association supports HB600 which requires creating a task force to address the issues of cyber flashing and nonconsensual sexual imagery.

Passing this bill is essential to me - I am committed to preventing sexual harassment and holding perpetrators accountable. At UMD, I work to enact these goals by joining organizations and their efforts to do so. Currently, I am an active member of the Student Government Association (SGA) and a student-run organization called “Preventing Sexual Assault” (PSA). Within the SGA, I am the Deputy Director for Governmental Affairs and often engage with the Sexual Misconduct Prevention Committee. Similarly, Preventing Sexual Assault is a student-run organization that aims to support survivors and change the rape culture on our campus. Our goal is to provide a space for open communication, spreading awareness, and implementing action on preventing sexual assault at UMD. I am a Committee Member for the Intersectional, Diversity, and Inclusion Chairs of PSA. In this position, I coordinate diversity events within the group, as well as externally with the larger UMD community. We deliver “real talks,” events designed to start dialogue around sexual assault, health relationships, power dynamics, and consent. Though I am proud of the work we do, it is critical to emphasize that we are limited as a student organization. Enacting this bill would enable more effective change in power-based violence prevention, therefore evincing that it would be greatly beneficial.

Finally, this bill is significant to me because it would prevent many other individuals from suffering from cyber flashing. Social media is an essential and easily accessible method of communication for this generation, which is especially emphasized at an institution of over 40,000 individuals. Many students receive a plethora of social media follow/friend requests upon enrollment to a higher education institution. Oftentimes, students are prompted to accept due to the extremely simple fact that the requests either come from profiles that have their higher education institution’s name in the bio, or from individuals that share membership/are also in the “new student” group chats. I myself gladly partook in these practices, putting “UMD ‘25” in my Instagram bio and joining group chats, ultimately finding a tight-knit friend group. This was not the case, however, for a friend of mine, as upon accepting a Snapchat request from an individual

in a “newly-accepted students” chat, she was sent a nonconsensual and sexually-explicit image. This was incredibly detrimental to my friend’s mental health, as she felt incredibly violated.

This is an emerging issue that requires comprehensive legislative solutions, and I therefore respectfully request a favorable vote on HB600.

Thank you,



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