



"Being here for Maryland's Children, Youth, and Families"

**Testimony submitted to House Economic Matters Committee
Support**

February 13, 2024

**House Bill 603 – Consumer Protection - Online Products and Services - Data of Children
(Maryland Kids Code)**

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus, which represents a network of Bureaus throughout the State of Maryland, **SUPPORTS** House Bill 603 Consumer Protection - Online Products and Services - Data of Children (Maryland Kids Code). Youth Service Bureaus provide prevention, intervention and treatment services and understand the importance of protecting children and adolescents online.

As providers who work with families we see the impact that social media, online gaming and growing use of technology on children and adolescents. We work with young people who are being bullied online, have been contacted by strangers online, struggle to navigate today's online world, are "addicted" to gaming and "checking" their phone, and parents who are struggling to help set appropriate controls and limits.

This bill will begin to offer some protection and peace of mind to families by requiring manufacturers and tech designers to protect children and adolescents and offer parents and caregivers the tools and designs to help them in protecting their children online. The bill will require companies to design online products with developmentally appropriate features, make high privacy settings the default, work to limit communication between adults and children they do not know, and will provide some oversight or standards regarding the development of materials for children and adolescents.

We urge the passage of this bill and encourage the legislature to work with the other states working to make this a National Standard to increase the ability of parents to protect their children online.

Respectfully Submitted:

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