



TESTIMONY FOR HB1062

Criminal Law – Harassment – Digitally Altered or Generated Visual Representations

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Lopez

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1062 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

There are so many forms that harassment can take these days. With the internet and the tools available, images can be spliced together so that one person's face can be digitally connected with someone else's body to make it look altogether seamless. It is hard to know what is real and what is fake.

These images are often used to harass or intimidate someone, and the target of this harassment has little recourse. This bill, if enacted, would prohibit someone from knowingly distributing a digitally altered or computer-generated image of another person that shows that person seemingly engaged in a sexual activity, or shows them exposed. The victim in this case would be able to file for damages and for injunctive relief. The court can also award reasonable attorney's fees.

Creation of these kinds of images with the intent to harm another person is an area that has not had much regulation. Additionally, the victims don't currently have the kinds of remedies that they should.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.