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Testimony in **Support** of

SB0065 – Criminal Law – Child Pornography – Prohibitions and Penalties

Re: Senate Bill - 65 – Judicial Proceedings Committee - Child Pornography – Prohibitions and Penalties

Chairman, Members of the Committee, and Senator James,

My name is Monica Meyers and I am a prosecutor from Prince George's County. I am responsible for the prosecution of individuals who use the internet to criminally exploit children. Although there are many ways that predators use the internet to exploit children, the most common is through the possession, distribution or solicitation of child pornography. These videos often involve elementary school aged children, toddlers, and even infants who are sexually exploited, often through rape. At times those children are bound and tied up, other times they are screaming for help as they are sexually assaulted.

Our office has recently taken the position that a Defendant should plea to every count for which they've been charged when it comes to having possessed, distributed, or solicited child pornography. That is not to be vindictive or draconian, but rather that is because as prosecutors we are not going to choose that only a handful of those children, whose rapes will live on the internet and be circulated for longer than they will be alive, will get justice, while the others do not. We recently prosecuted a man whose collection of child pornography contained some of the most horrific videos I have ever seen. After seeing those videos I knew our typical indictment charging 20-30 videos would not be sufficient. Therefore, he was indicted on 140 counts.

When word got around that we had charged 140 individual counts, I was approached by many members of the bar who questioned if I had charged the Defendant for every single video he possessed and distributed. I had not. Most Defendants possess thousands of files. The most I have seen in my career thus far was 20,000. While it was great that we are able to get justice for 140 victims, if we had a law, like the one contemplated in Senate Bill 65, we would have been able to get justice for so many more children whose rapes were hidden in secret folders contained on the Defendant's phone. Also from a practical position, not many judges are eager to take a plea of 140 counts.

This bill would allow us to seek justice for so many more children whose rapes are forever memorialized on the internet. These children, are deserving of justice, and unfortunately with the volume of videos most Defendants possess it is almost impossible for us to bring justice to a even a majority of these victims. Passing this bill would help us ensure justice for a greater number of victims and I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 65. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Monica Meyers, Assistant State's Attorney For Prince George's County