

Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 0555 “Criminal Law- Unauthorized Dissemination of Personal Identifying Information - Prohibition

I am writing to testify in strong support of House Bill 0555 “Criminal Law- Unauthorized Dissemination of Personal Identifying Information - Prohibition.”

I want to raise awareness of the crucial importance of prohibiting the dissemination of personal identifying information under criminal law. This is a dire need in light of the doxxing and threats that many, including Muslims and Arabs, have faced in the past weeks. Many of us consider the spaces we are in to be unsafe because of this threat, myself included.

As a student at Johns Hopkins University, I have witnessed the fearful atmosphere that exists due to the threat of doxxing/unauthorized dissemination of personal identifying information. I myself have been subject to such a threat on one instance.

On October 10th, my friend and I were standing in front of a statue on our campus--called the blue jay statue. It is a school custom to paint this statue for different occasions and events. We were looking at the statue as someone had painted it in support of Palestine. Soon, a large group of Zionist youth from the hillel gathered a distance away from us. One youth walked past us and took a picture of us standing in front of the statue without our permission. He tried to do this without us noticing. Though we asked him to delete it, I am not sure whether he had already sent it to others or not.

After this incident, there was a marked period of tension and apprehension on the campus as we heard about the severe doxxing cases at college campuses across America, such as Columbia and Harvard. This is a severe threat to the personal safety and security of students and people like me. We should not have to face threats of our personal information being leaked. We should not have to face the threat of our future and livelihood being sabotaged. We should not have to fear for our personal safety as we go about our normal lives.

It is imperative that we take immediate action to absolutely prohibit the unauthorized dissemination of personal identifying information. By making it clear that leaking such information is a criminal offense, we send a strong message that such behavior is completely unacceptable and intolerable in this society. Furthermore, by imposing meaningful penalties, including imprisonment and fines, we uphold the rule of law and deter individuals from engaging in such reprehensible acts.

Prohibiting the dissemination of personal identifying information under criminal law is an important and desperately necessary step to ensure the individual safety of citizens like myself and many many others. This is crucial for any system that considers itself to have integrity and justice. I urge you to support HB0555 and take concrete steps to ensure that individuals do not have to face the threat of the unauthorized dissemination of their identifying information.

Sincerely,

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