



TESTIMONY FOR HB0555

Criminal Law - Unauthorized Dissemination of Personal Identifying Information – Prohibition

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Johnson, A.

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB0555 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.

Judges, politicians, and even clergy members have reason to be afraid in our society. Any decision or position they take can and does result in threats of violence. Those threats have always been there, but the new way to harm those individuals comes through publishing their personal information and that of their families in personal spaces. So, what was already a problem that we should in no way minimize has now become a much wider sweeping and anonymous threat that targets people while they are in their homes or while their family members are at school, or shopping, or just going about their day.

This anonymous but public targeting of people (some of them minors) is not just a public way of bullying. It's dangerous and can result in real physical harm and should be treated as the crime that it is.

This bill, if enacted, would treat the publication of personal information with the intent to intimidate, abuse, threaten, harass, or frighten the someone in different ways depending on the outcome of the publication.

- If the information published, results in no one being harmed, it is considered a misdemeanor punished by between 9 and 12 months in jail and a fine of less than \$500.
- If the information published results in personal harm to the person targeted or their family members, it is considered a felony punished by between 1 and 5 years in jail and a fine of between \$1,000 and \$10,000.
- If the information is published that resulted in serious physical harm to the person targeted or one of their family members, it is considered a felony punished by between 5 and 10 years in jail and a fine of between \$1,000 and \$10,000.

- If the information is published that resulted in the death of the person targeted or one of their family members, it is considered a felony punished by between 10 and 20 years in jail and a fine of between \$1,000 and \$10,000.

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