

SB889 Testimony

February 26, 2025

Chair William Smith, Jr.
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony Favorable for SB889 Criminal Law - Distribution of Students' Personal Information - Prohibition

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Iman Shehadeh, and I am a student at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am here today to express my strong support for SB889, which seeks to protect young individuals from the harmful and dangerous impacts of doxxing.

Young people are at constant risk of having their privacy weaponized against them with the increasing accessibility of this information online. Without clear legal protections, perpetrators can be even more motivated, and victims are left defenseless. The urgency to act is now.

This issue is not just theoretical, it is personal. While engaging in social movements, I have faced threats of doxxing for speaking on unpopular issues. I have also seen close friends have their personal information, including addresses, employment history, and contact details, exposed on social media and online forums. In some cases, their workplaces were contacted, causing professional and personal strain. The lack of legislation against doxxing allows this kind of harassment to escalate unchecked, leaving individuals vulnerable to intimidation and serious consequences.

As a community member actively engaged in advocacy, I have seen how doxxing is a real threat to safety, and leads to loss of employment opportunities, mental health struggles, and disruptions in education. Many young people fear expressing their opinions or participating in civic engagement because they know that their personal information could be exposed and used against them. This bill provides crucial protections to ensure that students are safeguarded from malicious attacks.

Holding perpetrators accountable through this legislation sends a very clear message: weaponizing personal information to intimidate or harm others should and will not be tolerated. By passing SB889, Maryland can take an essential step toward ensuring that young people feel safe online and in their daily lives.

I urge the committee to support this bill and help create a safer, more secure environment for young individuals across our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Iman Shehadeh

University of Maryland, College Park