

BILL NO: Senate Bill 0360
TITLE: Revenge Porn – Civil Action and Criminal Offense
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
HEARING DATE: January 29, 2025
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is dedicated to ensuring the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women throughout the State. The clients that we represent have all experienced intimate partner violence, which may include physical, mental, and sexual abuse.

Senate Bill 0360 aims to regulate the distribution of non-consensual sexual imagery created using a computer-generated visual representation. This has become known as deepfake porn, which is defined as an image or recording that has been convincingly altered and manipulated to misrepresent someone as doing or saying something that was not actually done or said. The use of this technology has become a tool used by domestic abusers to harass, embarrass, and humiliate their victims. Nonconsensual intimate deepfakes are proliferating rapidly, overwhelmingly targeting women and especially girls. Intimate deepfakes, falsely but convincingly depicting people naked or engaged in sexual acts, can cause serious harm, with victims reporting experiencing significant emotional consequences and trauma, as well as damage to their reputations and careers.

So far, 23 states have enacted legislation to regulate this activity. SB 0360 will allow a victim to bring and maintain a civil action for defamation against someone distributing their computer-generated likeness in this regard, and introduces criminal penalties for a person knowingly distributing these depictions.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland believes that this bill will provide relief to many victims that have been targeted and humiliated by their abusers with AI-generated images of them engaging in non-consensual sexual imagery. For all these reasons we urge a favorable report on SB 0360.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a non-profit legal services organization whose mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland. Our mission is advanced through direct legal services, information and referral hotlines, and statewide advocacy.