

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 Dua Hussain, and I am a student at Johns Hopkins University. 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.

In the digital age, personal information is more accessible than ever, and young people are especially vulnerable to having their private details weaponized against them.

Doxxing—intentionally sharing someone's personal identifying information or image without consent and with harmful intent—has been used as a tool for harassment, intimidation, and even real-world harm. Unfortunately, students and young professionals, particularly those who engage in advocacy, journalism, or public discourse, are frequent targets.

As a student, I have been a victim of doxxing three times and have had first-hand experience in how it can lead to severe consequences, including threats to safety, loss of employment opportunities, mental health struggles, and disruptions in education. For myself, my mental health and safety suffered greatly. 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 individuals under 25 are safeguarded from these malicious attacks. It was relatively unknown that I did social justice work on my campus and I still experienced a situation in which I was cornered and had pictures taken of me without my permission in order to both threaten me and spread information about me around campus, all because I did advocacy work and these people did not agree with my positions on certain issues. The most recent occasion was not related to social justice work, but it was an instance where my information was posted on an anonymous app with inflammatory remarks about my work and character.

Holding perpetrators accountable through this legislation sends a clear message: weaponizing personal information to intimidate or harm others 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,

Dua Hussain

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Johns Hopkins University