

MSPA SB 889 Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Bradley Leposa

Position: FAV



Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
February 28, 2025

Bill: Senate Bill 889 – Criminal Law - Distribution of Students' Personal Information - Prohibition

Position: Support

Dear Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state. School psychologists provide comprehensive psychological services to children in Maryland's schools, including counseling, consultation and assessment. We are writing in support of SB 889, which is designed to protect students from harmful use of their image and personal information.

Almost every student in high school these days seems to be active on social media, as are many in middle school as well. But as social media use by young people has increased, so has the potential for harm. During these formative years some students can be highly vulnerable to social stressors, and experience strong feelings of anxiety and depression. In many cases these mental health concerns can be exacerbated by involvement with social media, and in some unfortunate cases the harm caused can be intentional. The consequences can be devastating for a vulnerable student, leading to heightened anxiety, depression, and even self-harm.

This bill seeks to prevent the potential harm that the public disclosure of their image and/or their personal information could cause to a vulnerable young person. MSPA urges you to consider a favorable report on SB 889. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at legislative@mspaonline.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Bradley Leposa, PHD NCSP
Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association

SB889%20%20Anti-Doxxing%20Testimony%20-%20Hussain,

Uploaded by: Dua Hussain

Position: FAV

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

dhussai1@jh.edu

Johns Hopkins University

SB889_MOST_FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Ellie Mitchell

Position: FAV



SB - 889 - Distribution of Students' Personal Information - Prohibition
Ways & Means Committee
February 26, 2025
Position: Favorable

The Maryland Out of School Time (MOST) Network is a statewide organization committed to closing opportunity gaps by increasing both the quantity and quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities for school-aged youth. We believe that ensuring young people have safe and supportive environments—both online and offline—is critical to their success.

Today's youth navigate an increasingly complex digital landscape where their personal information can be weaponized, leading to harmful and unsafe situations. One of the most alarming tactics used in cyberbullying is doxing—the deliberate search for and publication of private or identifying information about an individual online, typically with malicious intent. The consequences of doxing can be devastating, including identity theft, reputational damage, and severe emotional distress. In the most tragic cases, victims of cyber harassment have experienced deep psychological trauma, self-harm, and even suicide.

Senate Bill 889 takes a critical step in addressing this growing issue by establishing meaningful consequences for doxing, serving as both a deterrent and a protective measure for students. Beyond enforcement, this bill also presents an opportunity to strengthen school educational initiatives. We encourage schools to use this legislation as a catalyst for increased awareness and prevention efforts, counseling students on the risks associated with bullying, cyber harassment, and doxing. Research shows that individuals who engage in these harmful behaviors are often victims themselves, perpetuating a destructive cycle. By taking proactive measures, we can work to break this cycle and create a safer environment for all students.

For these reasons, the Maryland Out of School Time Network **strongly supports Senate Bill 889** and urges the committee to issue a **favorable report**.

Ellie Mitchell, Director, MOST Network/MD4CS, emitchell@mostnetwork.org

Maryland Out of School Time Network / Maryland
Coalition for Community Schools 1500 Union Ave / Suite
2300
Baltimore MD 21211 / 410 374-7692
www.mostnetwork.org

testimony FAV SB 889 personal info 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Tarsel

Position: FAV

Emily Tarsell, LCPC

**2314 Benson Mill Road
Sparks, Maryland 21152
February 26 , 2025**

Favorable SB 889

Criminal Law - Distribution of Students' Personal Information - Prohibition

Dear Chairman Smith and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Members,

I am Emily Tarsell, a mother, licensed therapist and founder of Health Choice Maryland. We are all concerned about the security of personal information and informed consent.

Youth and young adults are particularly vulnerable to being prey for exploitation and harm from unapproved disclosure of personal information and/or malicious statements and visuals. This bill seeks to address this issue by holding the perpetrator accountable by law.

We ask your Favorable vote for **SB889**.

Thank you.

Emily Tarsell, LCPC

IKRAM_ SB889 Anti-Doxxing Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Ikram Abdu

Position: FAV

SB889 Testimony

February 24, 2025

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

Re: Testimony Favorable for SB0889 Criminal Law - Distribution of Students' Personal Information - Prohibition

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

My name is Ikram Abdu, 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.

We live in a world where almost everything is digital, social media is not just for staying in touch, it is where we network, apply for jobs, and express ourselves. But for some, it is also where they become targets. Doxxing does not just expose information; it puts real people in real danger. No one should have to fear for their safety just because they have an opinion or express their beliefs. Disagreements should not turn into personal attacks, but doxxing takes private details and weaponizes them, leaving people vulnerable to harassment, threats, and real-world harm.

I know firsthand how devastating the consequences of doxxing can be. Recently, I was falsely accused of an act I did not commit, and my full name was shared online alongside inflammatory allegations. As a result, I was subjected to an overwhelming wave of online harassment, including death threats and messages from people claiming they would report me to my university and contact my past employers. I was forced to deactivate all my social media accounts and wipe my digital footprint to the best of my ability. It is already scary to walk on the streets being a visible Muslim and Black but the additional layer of being targeted online for something I would never do is extremely terrifying.

Doxxing can completely upend a person's life, putting their safety at risk, costing them job opportunities, taking a toll on their mental health, and disrupting their education. Many young people hold back from sharing their opinions or engaging in important conversations out of fear that their personal information could be exposed and weaponized against them. This bill is a crucial step in protecting individuals under 25, ensuring they are not left vulnerable to these harmful attacks.

This legislation is a necessary step in holding perpetrators accountable and sending a clear message that using personal information to harass, intimidate, or endanger others is unacceptable. By passing SB0889, Maryland can help ensure that young people are protected and feel safe both online and in their daily lives.

I do not want anyone else to go through what I went through. The fear, the anxiety, and the constant worry of being recognized or targeted are not something anyone should have to live with. No one should feel unsafe just walking on their own campus or existing in their own space. This kind of harm doesn't just disappear when the screen turns off, it follows you everywhere. So I urge the committee to support this bill and take a stand to protect young people from the lasting impact of doxxing.

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

Sincerely,

Ikram Abdu

University of Maryland, College Park

IMAN_ SB889 Anti-Doxxing Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Iman Shehadeh

Position: FAV

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

SB889 Testimony 2.26 Kimberly Syuardi.pdf

Uploaded by: Kimberly Syuardi

Position: FAV



Council on American-Islamic Relations

CAIR Office in Maryland

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**~~SB889 Testimony Favorable for SB889 Criminal Law - Distribution of Students' Personal Information -~~
Prohibition**

February 26, 2025

Chair William Smith, Jr.

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

2 East Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, MD 21401

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

My name is Kimberly Syuardi and I am CAIR Maryland's Outreach Coordinator. I recently graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park. As a recent student and activist, I am here today to express my strong support for SB889. This bill is crucial to protect our youth from the detrimental effects of doxxing.

I have personally witnessed the severe harm that doxxing can inflict. Friends of mine have been targeted simply for speaking out on social and political issues. Their personal information—home addresses, phone numbers, and workplaces—was spread online without their consent. As a result, they faced relentless harassment, including death threats and online abuse that made them fear for their safety.

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.

No one should have to live in fear because their private information has been weaponized against them. Doxxing is not just an invasion of privacy—it is a form of intimidation that silences voices and puts lives at risk.

I urge you to support this bill to help protect people from being targeted, threatened, and silenced simply for existing or expressing their beliefs. SB889 is a crucial step in ensuring that individuals have legal recourse against this form of digital harassment and that those who engage in doxxing are held accountable. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Syuardi

Maryland Outreach Coordinator, CAIR

Council on American-Islamic Relations

ksyuardi@cair.com

Washington D.C.

Alabama Arizona California Colorado Connecticut Florida Georgia Illinois Kansas Kentucky Maryland
Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Missouri New Jersey New York North Carolina Ohio Oklahoma Pennsylvania
Texas Washington

SB889_NicoleMorse_JVPA_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: NICOLE MORSE

Position: FAV

February 26, 2025

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

Re: Testimony In Support of SB889 Distribution of Students' Personal Information - Prohibition

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Submitted by: Jewish Voice for Peace Action members in Baltimore

I submit this testimony on behalf of myself and other Jewish Voice for Peace Action members in Baltimore, a grassroots organization committed to justice, human rights, and the protection of all communities against targeted harassment and intimidation. We strongly support SB889 and urge its swift passage.

Doxxing—the malicious publication of personal information to encourage harassment, threats, or violence—has increasingly been weaponized against activists, journalists, educators, and marginalized communities, including Jews, Palestinians, Muslims, Black and brown activists, and other advocates for human rights. We have seen firsthand how doxxing has been used to silence voices critical of systemic injustice, endangering individuals and their families.

As an organization that stands against all forms of hate, we recognize that doxxing is not just an issue of privacy but of public safety. The consequences of being doxxed can be devastating: job loss, physical threats, swatting incidents, and long-term psychological harm. No one should have to fear for their safety for exercising their rights to free speech and civic engagement.

This legislation provides critical protections by establishing clear legal consequences for those who engage in doxxing and ensuring that Maryland residents—regardless of their race, religion, or political beliefs—are safeguarded from online harassment campaigns designed to incite real-world harm.

In a time of rising political intimidation and hate-fueled attacks, Maryland has the opportunity to take a stand against these dangerous tactics and affirm its commitment to protecting civil liberties. We urge the General Assembly to pass this bill and send a clear message that targeted harassment has no place in our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jewish Voice for Peace Action members in Baltimore

NOOR_ SB889 Anti-Doxxing Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Noor Daoud

Position: FAV

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 Noor Daoud, and I am a student at River hill high school. I am here today to express my strong support for SB889, which seeks to protect students and young individuals from the dangerous and severe impacts of doxxing.

In today's digital world, a persons personal information is more accessible than ever, and young people are especially vulnerable to having their private details exploited maliciously. Doxxing—which is intentionally disclosing someone's personal information without consent—can be used as a weapon for harassment, intimidation, and even physical harm. Unfortunately, students and young professionals, particularly those involved in advocacy, journalism, or public discourse, are frequent targets.

As a student and member of my community, I have witnessed firsthand how doxxing can severely majorly impact someone's life. Several people I know have been doxxed, and the consequences have been devastating—ruining reputations, limiting career opportunities, and, in some cases, leaving individuals fearful for their safety. These experiences have caused many students to become hesitant or outright fearful of expressing their opinions or participating in public discourse because they know their personal information could be exposed and used against them.

This bill is crucial because it provides the nessasry protections for individuals under 25, ensuring that young people can engage freely in civic life without the fear of having all their information leaked. It would give them the peace of mind to express themselves, knowing that there are legal protections in place to prevent their personal information from being weaponized.

The fear of doxxing is not abstract—it's a very real issue that affects students' mental health and well-being. Many are afraid to use their constitutional rights or to stand up for their beliefs, as they worry that doing so could put their personal information at risk. Passing SB889 would send a strong message that Maryland stands with its young people, ensuring that their rights to free expression and safety are protected.

I urge the committee to support this bill and take an important step toward creating a safer environment for young individuals in our state. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Noor Daoud
River Hill High School, Junoir

For SB0889 - Prince George's 4 Palestine.pdf

Uploaded by: Raaheela Ahmed

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support of SB0889
Presented by Prince George's 4 Palestine

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Prince George's 4 Palestine, a grassroots community organizing group of over 500 members in Prince George's County, Maryland. We are a diverse coalition of people committed to advocating for Palestinian liberation, and we have worked tirelessly to push for policies that reflect our values of justice, dignity, and human rights. Today, I am here to express our strong support for Maryland's SB0889, and I urge you to consider its critical importance in both the context of our work and the broader issues of freedom of speech, safety, and accountability.

As a former elected member of the Prince George's County Board of Education, I know far too well the dangers our students face in expressing political speech. This is why I co-led efforts to create and successfully pass a student demonstrations policy in our district, which allows students to peacefully and safely express their views without facing punitive consequences. This policy is a testament to the importance of protecting students' rights to engage in social issues, and it serves as a model of how we can safeguard their voices, just as SB0889 does on the state level.

Specifically, SB0889 will protect young people from doxxing, the practice of maliciously publishing personal information about an individual to cause them harm. For activists seeking peace in the Middle East, doxxing has become a real and frankly terrifying concern. As CNBC reported last year, Republican donors have been funding a far-right activist group which publishes the names and photos of peaceful student activists, accusing them of antisemitism and supporting terrorism.

Here in Maryland, our group has been peacefully advocating for an end to the U.S. sponsorship of Israeli violence for nearly a year and a half. As evidence of the broad support for this agenda throughout the community, eight municipalities within Prince George's County have passed resolutions calling for a permanent ceasefire in Palestine. We have held rallies and vigils, worked with local elected officials to pass these resolutions, and advocated to our federal representatives. Despite the orderly and considerate nature of our efforts, we all fear doxxing—because it can ruin lives. Many of our members are Jewish, yet the fear of being accused of antisemitism and losing jobs or educational opportunities is real, because the reputational smears of the far-right are ruthless.

Prince George's County is home to a number of institutions of higher learning, including Bowie State University, Prince George's Community College, Capitol College, and more. Many students, faculty, and staff at these institutions actively engage in advocacy for social justice issues, including Palestinian liberation. These individuals should not have to fear retaliation for expressing their views or engaging in peaceful activism.

Furthermore, we have seen underage teenage activists in our county who have been fighting for Palestinian rights. Just last year, hundreds of students from Bowie High School participated in a walkout calling for a ceasefire resolution, demanding an end to the violence in Palestine. These young activists are particularly vulnerable to doxxing, as they navigate the complexities of speaking out while still in high school. They, too, could become targets of online harassment, threats, and intimidation simply for using their voices to advocate for what they believe is right.

As you may know, Prince George's County is also home to our state's flagship school, the University of Maryland, which has seen years of targeted harassment, doxxing, and intimidation aimed at students who advocate for Palestinian rights. Every year, students who raise their voices in support of Palestine have been subjected to malicious online campaigns, with their personal information shared publicly, leading to threats and harassment. This kind of harassment is not just an attack on individuals; it is an attack on the very essence of free speech, academic freedom, and democratic engagement.

Doxxing is an act of intimidation. It is a form of violence that seeks to silence dissent by making individuals fear for their safety. For our group, it is not just an abstract concern—it is a daily reality for many of our members. The fear that our members face when standing up for Palestinian rights is real, and it is growing. This is why SB0889 is so critical. It will help protect individuals who are targeted for speaking out against injustice and allow our community to continue its work without fear of retaliation.

We believe SB0889 sends a powerful message that Maryland will not tolerate intimidation, harassment, or violence aimed at silencing those advocating for justice. It is a step toward ensuring that all Marylanders—whether they are advocating for Palestinian rights or any other cause—can speak out freely and safely.

Our community is strong, but we cannot do this work alone. We need the protection of our lawmakers to ensure that our voices continue to be heard, that our students are safe on campus, and that our rights to organize and advocate for justice are upheld.

Prince George's 4 Palestine stands in full support of SB0889, and we urge this committee to pass it without hesitation. Thank you for your time, your attention, and your commitment to justice.

Sincerely,
Raaheela Ahmed
Prince George's 4 Palestine

RACHEL- SB889 Anti-Doxxing Testimony.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Turner-Siewert

Position: FAV

SB889 Template 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 Rachel Turner-Siewert. I am here today to express my strong support for SB889.

This bill is a crucial step in protecting young individuals from the dangerous impacts of doxxing and ensuring that there are structures in place to hold perpetrators accountable.

I want to share a personal story about my own experience with doxxing.

When I was 18 and a college student, I sent a private message to a friend—something deeply personal that I intended only for her.

The next morning, I received a call from my mom. She told me that my message had been posted publicly. Not only that, but my entire family—my grandparents, my professors, my friends, and acquaintances—had all been tagged.

Everyone I knew had access to the confidential information I had shared in what I believed was a private conversation. I still don't know exactly how it happened, though I suspect retaliation from an ex. What I do remember, vividly, is the moment I realized what had happened—the horror, as if the floor had dropped out from under me.

I was fortunate. My family and friends stood by me, offering love and support. I still have a letter from my aunt expressing her concern and reminding me that I was not alone. But even with that support, I experienced significant mental trauma, and my college education was disrupted.

I was lucky in that the information exposed primarily affected me and my personal reputation. Many others are not so lucky.

The consequences of doxxing can be devastating, particularly for young people—students, young professionals, and those engaged in advocacy, journalism, or community organizing. Without protections in place, they are left vulnerable to harassment, intimidation, and real-world harm.

As a mother, and as someone who is learning to engage in activism and community organizing, I urge this committee to support SB889. This bill is a crucial step toward creating a safer digital environment for young individuals in Maryland.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rachel Turner-Siewert

SB889 Sponsor Testimony

Uploaded by: Shaneka Henson

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR TESTIMONY

SB889 Criminal Law - Distribution of Students Personal Information - Prohibition

Chairman Smith and Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce and provide key details regarding SB889 Criminal Law - Distribution of Students Personal Information - Prohibition

For the record, I am Senator Shaneka Helson from the 30th Legislative District of Anne Arundel County, MD.

For those of you who may be unfamiliar with the term “doxxing” – it means....” the action or process of searching for and intentionally maliciously publishing private or identifying information about a particular individual.....on the internet.

We also know today that students of all ages are among the most vulnerable to be preyed upon – by classmates, outside sources and trolls. For example, last December, the University of Maryland received two egregious doxxing cases that led to death threats against UMD students. Upon further investigation UMD campus police confirmed that the state of Maryland currently has NO anti-doxxing laws to protect students.

The purpose of SB889 is to prohibit a person or groups from distributing personal identifying information or images of a student enrolled in an institution of secondary education or an institution of postsecondary education with intent or knowledge that the information will be used to harm the student; or with reckless disregard for the risk that the information will be used to harm the student. It makes the person who violates this Act guilty of a misdemeanor crime and is subject to imprisonment of up to 1 year or a fine of up to \$5,000 or both.

SB 889 offers vital protections by:

1. Prohibiting the intentional distribution of students' personal identifying information without consent if done with malicious intent or reckless disregard for harm.
2. Recognizing the severe emotional, psychological, and physical risks that result from doxxing.

3. Establishing clear legal consequences for perpetrators, ensuring accountability and deterrence.
4. Reaffirming First Amendment rights by balancing protections against targeted harassment with free speech considerations.

Why do we need this? Maryland current laws against cyberstalking and harassment, have many gaps and simply do not go far enough. For example, “Grace’s Law” was originally enacted in October 2013 to address the changing digital landscape, making the misuse of internet-based communications to intimidate or harass a minor a criminal offense. It was enacted in response to the tragic suicide of Grace McComas, a 15-year-old girl from Howard County, Maryland, who was cyberbullied relentlessly before taking her own life in 2012. Her parents, especially her mother Christine McComas advocated for stronger laws against online harassment and cyberbullying after discovering that Grace had been subjected to months of persistent online abuse through social media.

The 2013 version of Grace’s Law.

- Made repeated and malicious electronic harassment of a minor a misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in prison and a \$500 fine.
- Criminalized the use of electronic communications to cause a minor serious emotional distress or fear for their safety.

In 2019, Grace’s Law was strengthened by increasing penalties for cyberbullying and expanding protections for minors. It:

- Increased the maximum penalty to three years in prison and a \$10,000 fine for cases where electronic communications cause serious emotional distress to a minor.
- Covered indirect harassment, including when a third party is encouraged to harass someone.
- Applied to social media, email, and text messages, recognizing the evolving nature of online abuse.

Senate Bill 889 seeks to build on Grace’s Law and provide protections for students in both secondary and post-secondary education.

After you hear today’s panelists' experiences, I urge you to give this SB889 a favorable vote.

Zainab Chaudry, Pharm.D - Director, CAIR Maryland
Rachel Turner-Siewert (Parent)
Ikram Abdu (UMD Student)
Iman Shehadah (UMD Student)
Noor Daoud (HCPSS Student)

SB0889-testimony-24Feb25.pdf

Uploaded by: William Simonds

Position: FAV

SB0889

(FAV) (SUPPORT)

As a Maryland resident, practicing physician, and parent of two children who attended the University of Maryland, I strongly **urge support of SB0889**, to protect the rights of students and other individuals to express their views, free from “doxxing”, harassment, threats, or intimidation.

My reasons for supporting this bill are multiple:

- The Maryland General Assembly should do all it can to STOP the practice of “doxing” of students, which is the malicious act of publicly revealing someone's private or personally identifiable information online without their consent. This information can include, without limitation, someone's private email address, phone number, home address, family address, financial details or sensitive documents.
- Maryland should be committed to upholding a safe and secure environment for all student members of our community.
- Doxing can have serious consequences for students in Maryland, putting them at risk of stalking, identity theft, physical harm and even job loss.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you **preserve freedom of expression** and protect the rights of students and other individuals to express their views, free from “doxxing”, harassment, threats, or intimidation. **In the strongest possible terms, I urge support of Senate Bill 0889.**

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

William F. Simonds, MD
11902 Smoketree Rd.
Potomac, Maryland 20854

SB889.pdf

Uploaded by: Zainab Chaudry

Position: FAV



Council on American-Islamic Relations

CAIR Office in Maryland

6120 Baltimore National Pike, Suite 2D

Baltimore, MD 21228

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February 26, 2025

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

Re: Testimony In Support of SB889 Distribution of Students' Personal Information - Prohibition

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), I thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of Senate Bill 889 **Distribution of Students' Personal Information – Prohibition**, which would prohibit the unauthorized distribution of students' personal identifying information with intent to harm or with reckless disregard for potential harm. CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization.

This critical legislation addresses the rising threat of doxxing, an increasingly common form of targeted harassment that disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, including religious minorities, and especially students of different religions, races, identities and backgrounds.

Doxxing: A Growing Threat to Privacy and Safety

Doxxing—the malicious act of publicly exposing an individual's private information without consent—has led to devastating consequences for victims. According to reputable research:

- In 2024, approximately 4 percent of Americans – an estimated 11 million people – reported that they've personally been victims of doxxing attacks.^{1,2}
- About half of all victims said their home addresses or emails were made public. About 1 in 4 said doxxers distributed their photos or videos online, and about 1 in 5 victims said perpetrators shared personal information about their families.¹
- Common consequences of doxxing include physical safety risks, academic impact, financial losses, adverse mental health consequences including anxiety and depression, damage to reputation.
- Approximately 73% of internet users report that they limit what they share online to avoid being doxxed.¹

Additionally:

- Over 43% of internet users in the U.S. have experienced some form of online harassment, and over 10% have been doxxed. (Pew Research Center, 2021)
- Students are frequent targets of malicious or retaliatory doxxing attacks, with mounting reports of high school and college students facing threats, academic repercussions, and job loss due to malicious online exposure.
- A 2023 study by the University of California found that 78% of doxxing victims reported significant mental health impacts, including anxiety, depression, and PTSD.

Washington D.C.

Alabama Arizona California Colorado Connecticut Florida Georgia Illinois Kansas Kentucky Maryland
Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Missouri New Jersey New York North Carolina Ohio Oklahoma Pennsylvania
Texas Washington

Doxxing's Disproportionate Impact on Marginalized Students

Jewish, Muslim, Arab, Black, and other students of color—as well as those engaged in advocacy on issues like racial justice and human rights—have been disproportionately targeted in doxxing attacks. Students have seen their home addresses, phone numbers, and even family information leaked online, leading to death threats and online hate campaigns. These attacks are aimed to intimidate and silence them, directly undermining First Amendment rights while jeopardizing students' well-being.

In 2024, CAIR's Maryland office recorded 609 case reports of incidents, complaints and requests for assistance between January and December. Approximately 16 percent (over 90) of these case reports were of bullying and cyberbullying, including doxxing incidents targeting Muslim, Jewish and Arab (Christian and Muslim) students. Many of these students exist at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities, such as “Muslim” or “Jewish” and/or “immigrant” or “queer,” putting them in an even more vulnerable position.

No student should ever have to choose between their faith, identity or convictions for fear of being maliciously targeted and attacked.

Current Laws Are Insufficient

While Maryland has laws against cyberstalking and harassment, these existing laws have many gaps and simply do not go far enough. Grace's Law was originally enacted in October 2013 to address the changing digital landscape, making the misuse of internet-based communications to intimidate or harass a minor a criminal offense. It was enacted in response to the tragic suicide of Grace McComas, a 15-year-old girl from Howard County, Maryland, who was cyberbullied relentlessly before taking her own life in 2012. Her parents, especially her mother Christine McComas, advocated for stronger laws against online harassment and cyberbullying after discovering that Grace had been subjected to months of persistent online abuse through social media.

The 2013 version of Grace's Law:

- Made repeated and malicious electronic harassment of a minor a misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in prison and a \$500 fine.
- Criminalized the use of electronic communications to cause a minor serious emotional distress or fear for their safety

In 2019, Grace's Law was strengthened by increasing penalties for cyberbullying and expanding protections for minors. It:

- Increased the maximum penalty to three years in prison and a \$10,000 fine for cases where electronic communications cause serious emotional distress to a minor.
- Covered indirect harassment, including when a third party is encouraged to harass someone.
- Applied to social media, email, and text messages, recognizing the evolving nature of online abuse.

Senate Bill 889 seeks to build on Grace's Law and provide protections for students in both secondary and post-secondary education.

While Grace's Law targets **cyberbullying and harassment**, Senator Henson's proposed **Senate Bill 889 (2025)** aligns with the intent of Grace's Law by aiming to criminalize **unauthorized distribution of students' personal identifying information**, recognizing that doxxing can lead to **harassment, stalking, threats, and real-world violence**.

In one particularly egregious case that our office handled in December 2024, we were informed by Lt. Mable of the University of Maryland Campus Police that there was “nothing they could do” to intervene in the case of two University of Maryland students who received death threats and suffered substantial emotional, mental and physical consequences after being doxxed by a former roommate who retaliated in this manner after a University investigation concluded that there was no evidence or basis for her accusations of wrongdoing against them.

[Washington D.C.](#)

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[Texas](#) [Washington](#)

Existing statutes simply fail to address the unique vulnerabilities of students whose information can be exploited for harassment, threats, and intimidation. SB 889 closes this gap by specifically criminalizing the malicious distribution of student information and extends protections to students in postsecondary education.

SB 889 offers vital protections by:

1. Prohibiting the intentional distribution of students' personal identifying information without consent if done with malicious intent or reckless disregard for harm.
2. Recognizing the severe emotional, psychological, and physical risks that result from doxxing.
3. Establishing clear legal consequences for perpetrators, ensuring accountability and deterrence.
4. Reaffirming First Amendment rights by balancing protections against targeted harassment with free speech considerations.

Maryland has among the strongest anti-bullying laws in our country, but in today's day and age, even these do not go far enough. Regardless of where one stands on the political spectrum, no one should ever fear for their life. The rise of online extremism, swatting, and coordinated harassment campaigns has made legislation like SB889 increasingly necessary. The passage of Senate Bill 889 would further protect students from digital harassment in an era where online attacks can have devastating consequences.

Grace was only 15 years old when our system failed to protect her. She should be here today, with her mother and family. **We simply cannot allow our system to fail more students because we did not take action.** The most important concern any student in primary, secondary or postsecondary education should ever have is passing their next exam or preparing for a quiz. No student, regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, or any protected classification, should ever have to worry about being defenseless and unable to protect themselves from these malicious attacks.

I respectfully urge you to pass SB 889 in honor of Grace's memory, for the witnesses who are testifying here today, and for all of those who wanted to be here today but were too afraid fear of drawing more unwanted attention to themselves.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Zainab Chaudry, Pharm.D.
Director, CAIR Maryland
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
zchaudry@cair.com

1. <https://www.safehome.org/family-safety/doxxing-online-harassment-research/>
2. <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/what-is-doxxing-and-how-can-educators-protect-their-privacy-online/2024/05>

Washington D.C.

Alabama Arizona California Colorado Connecticut Florida Georgia Illinois Kansas Kentucky Maryland
Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Missouri New Jersey New York North Carolina Ohio Oklahoma Pennsylvania
Texas Washington

SB889 SPSC

Uploaded by: Andrew Kingman

Position: FWA

February 25, 2025

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
The Honorable Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 889 – Distribution of Students’ Personal Information

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

The State Privacy & Security Coalition (SPSC), a coalition representing over 30 companies and six trade associations across sectors including retail, telecommunications, technology, automotive, healthcare, and payment cards, appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on Maryland Senate Bill 889 – *Distribution of Students’ Personal Information*. While protecting student privacy is a critical concern, we have serious reservations about the bill’s scope and its potential unintended consequences.

First, the Maryland Online Data Privacy Act of 2024 (MODPA) already includes strong protections for children’s personal data. Given these existing safeguards, enacting a separate criminal statute with potentially unintended consequences may be unnecessary. For instance, MODPA provides the following key protections:

- **Compliance with COPPA**: The bill aligns with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) by recognizing controllers and processors that meet COPPA’s verifiable parental consent standards as compliant with Maryland’s parental consent requirements.
- **Definition of “Child”**: The legislation adopts COPPA’s definition of “child,” ensuring consistency with federal regulations.
- **Parental Rights Over Children’s Data**: Parents and legal guardians have the right to access, correct, or request deletion of their child’s personal information.
- **Restrictions on Targeted Advertising**: The bill prohibits processing children’s data for targeted advertising when the controller knows or should know the consumer is between ages 13 and 18.
- **General Data Security Requirements**: Controllers and processors handling children’s data must implement reasonable administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to prevent unauthorized access or processing.

Given these comprehensive protections under MODPA, additional criminal provisions should be carefully evaluated to avoid unnecessary duplication and unintended legal consequences.

Second, the bill appears to extend beyond the traditional educational context, creating liability for individuals who may not even be aware that they are handling covered student data. The broad definition of “distribute” and the inclusion of secondary and post-secondary students significantly expand liability in ways that could be impractical to enforce and inadvertently criminalize routine information sharing. As drafted, the bill could apply to common student-related activities, such as sharing information in social media posts, job applications, or networking events, even without intent to harm. This raises serious concerns about over-criminalization and potential First Amendment implications.

To appropriately regulate student data, the Committee should consider amending the bill to reference MD Education Code § 4-131 (2024) and apply its requirements to “operators” as defined in that statute. This would ensure that educational vendors handling student data in an educational context are properly regulated, while avoiding undue burdens on individuals who may unknowingly share such information.

STATE PRIVACY & SECURITY COALITION

Finally, while we believe that the education code is the best place to protect student information, if this bill proceeds, it is imperative to clarify intent and knowledge requirements in its criminal provisions. Specifically, we recommend amending Page 3, Line 22 as follows:

WITH:

(I) INTENT AND KNOWLEDGE THAT THE PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION OR IMAGE WILL BE USED TO HARM THE STUDENT; AND

(II) RECKLESS DISREGARD FOR THE RISK THAT THE PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION OR IMAGE WILL BE USED TO HARM THE STUDENT.

Requiring actual knowledge and intent to cause harm is essential to prevent the criminalization of individuals who inadvertently share benign student-related information. Given that secondary and post-secondary students routinely share their own and others' information in various contexts, criminal penalties should be reserved for those acting with malicious intent rather than individuals engaging in common or incidental data sharing.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to amend SB 889 to align with existing education data privacy statutes and ensure that criminal penalties are narrowly tailored to truly harmful conduct.

We would be happy to answer any questions and look forward to continued conversations.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrew A. Kingman
Counsel, State Privacy & Security Coalition

Legislative Letter SB0889_Burns.pdf

Uploaded by: Brooke Burns

Position: FWA

February 24, 2025

Dear Honorable Senators,

My name is Brooke Burns and I am currently an 18 year-old student at Linganore High School in Frederick, MD. I am submitting this letter to register strong support for **SB0889-Criminal Law – Distribution of Students’ Personal Information - Prohibition** with amendments. This legislation will provide sorely needed additional protection to students, however, it does not apply these same protections to adults.

This legislation provides protections for me that, unfortunately, were not in place when a **male classmate of mine created graphic sexually explicit social media accounts impersonating me and many other high school girls (all minors)**. He confessed to the Frederick County police that he created these pornographic social media accounts, as well as, emails, etc. using the names/likeness of the girls. **Incredibly, the Maryland State’s Attorney said that what he did does not constitute a crime under the current laws of Maryland!**

The best the State’s Attorney could do was to attempt to charge him for identity theft, however, after being challenged by the perpetrator’s attorney, she had to withdraw those charges. She stated that the current laws of Maryland require someone who is charged with identity theft to have received financial benefit from the identity theft. Unfortunately, the State’s Attorney did not identify a financial benefit to the perpetrator. She said that federal law allows for non-monetary benefit in charging for identity theft but not Maryland law.

The proposed changes to Maryland law included in SB0889 cover distributing images without consent and, most importantly for a situation like mine, adds **“reckless disregard for the risk that the personal information or image will be used to harm the student.”** I believe that, had this been in place when images of me and my friends were posted online without our consent or knowledge, the perpetrator could have been charged with a crime in the state of Maryland. Unfortunately, the new law was not passed in time to help me but will help to protect others that experience a similar situation once this law is passed.

Maryland enacted Grace’s Law in October 2023. This law prohibits a person from using electronic communication that alarms or seriously annoys someone 1) with the intent to harass, alarm or annoy the other person, 2) after receiving a reasonable warning or request to stop and 3) without a legal purpose. However, in our case, the State’s Attorney indicated that she could not find evidence that these accounts were set up with the intent to harass, alarm or annoy the girls. Therefore, Grace’s Law does not apply to the atrocious acts the perpetrator committed in our case. Per the Frederick County detective, the perpetrator admitted to setting up these social media accounts in order to pose as underage girls to attempt to get adult males to contact him for his sexual gratification.

I and the other girls have explicit sexual social medial accounts bearing our name and pictures that we had no part in creating. Furthermore, these accounts may never be fully

erased from our online presence. This could have a significant impact on us in the future when applying for colleges, employment opportunities, etc. if someone finds this information online. It is outlandish that we have to suffer all of this while the perpetrator cannot currently be charged for any crimes in Maryland related to the things he did to us!

Below is a more detailed discussion of the events and impact the perpetrator's actions have had on me and the other girls. I am hoping that after you read this, you will get a better feel for the extent of his actions.

When this all started for me, I was a 16 – year old high school student living in Frederick County, MD. I am a victim of cybercrime that has profoundly impacted my psychological well-being, social life, and academic performance. It has also created an explicit and pornographic digital footprint that is virtually impossible to eliminate. I am shocked that our current laws did not protect me.

On December 5, 2023, Frederick City Detectives from the Cyber Crime Unit came to my house because they received a tip from the National Center of Missing and Exploited Children that a sexually explicit account on X (Twitter) was created that contained pornographic (nude) pictures of me. At the time, the detectives indicated that one of my friends also had a similar online profile on X. Subsequent to that date, a total of seven people had sites created by the perpetrator (six minors and one male adult). In total, seventeen minor girls had pictures included on these social media sites created by the perpetrator.

The trauma started that night. I was terrified, angry, and scared for my physical safety. At that time, the fear around the unknown of who did this, why and if it was a person that was stalking me and may come to our house was all consuming. I asked my dad to double-check to make sure all the doors were locked and the alarm was set and I was afraid to sleep alone in my own bedroom.

A few days later, the Frederick County sheriff's department identified that the IP address for the fake X account belonged to a student who is in my second period class. We started scouring the internet and found many accounts and more victims, many of which are my close friends. To date fifteen accounts have been identified to impersonate me and over eighty accounts and counting for all the victims related to the case. It is difficult to explain the graphic nature and the egregiousness of these sites. These sites contain explicit content, specifically marketing me and others as underage. The sites show my picture and engage with users to respond to sexually explicit questions.

Some of the sites entice followers to interact with us including asking for them to email to get nude pictures. The accounts and postings have lewd and suggestive comments posted by hundreds of unknown online users. The sites have links to other accounts that say things like – “to see my dirty little secrets click here”. And this is benign to many of the statements. One site of a victim had 750,000 views and was averaging 99,000 more views per month.

My parents worked with the Frederick County School Board and the perpetrator was removed from my school. Even with him out of my school, this crime destroyed my sense of security. They have caused me to miss school and change my social behavior. I did not want to interact with him in the community and am afraid that he will continue to create false and harmful content about me.

I do not fully know how this will follow me throughout my life. I have even had someone who viewed the fraudulent sites reach out to me on my personal account. This is terrifying! Will more users participating in these fraudulent sites reach out to me? Will colleges or future employers look at this online presence and make adverse decisions about me?

I did nothing wrong! I did not take or post any inappropriate pictures of myself. The impact of this perpetrator's actions has been devastating to my family. In addition to the emotional trauma caused, my parents have also had to spend a significant amount of time and money to try to identify and attempt to take down as many fraudulent accounts as possible. To date, only a few of the sites have been taken down. They knew we would be unable to find all the fraudulent accounts so they hired a cyber forensics company to scrub the internet and locate as many sites as they could. The cyber forensics expert told us that the number of sites is egregious and that they think it would be naïve to expect that they will be able to identify and erase all the digital footprint. This **will** continue to follow me as the digital footprint is impossible to get rid of.

My parents expect to continue to incur significant legal fees to help force the online providers to close these accounts, to continue to work with the forensics company to identify the sites – as their expert opinion is that more work will be needed over the upcoming years especially to identify and close fraudulent accounts.

My parents and I are sickened that the laws do not adequately address the damage to my life and our lives.

As mentioned above, we have worked with the State's Attorney's Office and this perpetrator was not found guilty of breaking a law for his actions in this case. How is this possible? Someone for their own personal gain – created false accounts, impersonated me online with sexually explicit pictures, for the purpose of engaging with men that wanted to interact with minor girls.

In conclusion, I am requesting that you support the passing of SB0889 with amendments to also protect adults.

I would like to take this devastating situation and know that I made a difference in helping to protect other teenagers from similar experiences.

I would appreciate the opportunity to answer your questions. My parent's email is abnburns@comcast.net and Ann Burns (my mom's) cell number is 410-707-3022.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brooke E. Burns

Brooke Burns

SB889

Uploaded by: Rachel Battaglia

Position: FWA

Rachel Battaglia
2/19/2025
SB #889

Testimony in Support of Criminal Law- Distribution of Student's Personal Information-Prohibition

Senator's and Chairman's of this committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Rachel Battaglia, and I am a student at Linganore High School, in Frederick County MD. I am here to express my strong support for the bill SB#889, which seeks to prohibit a person from distributing personal identifying information or images of a student enrolled in an institution of education, that will be used to harm the student or with reckless discard for the risk.

I believe this legislation is critical to help protect future potential victims. Current legislation falls short to address what happens online today. Updates to the law to include "reckless discard for the risk" will hold those who prey on victims online for purposes beyond financial gain, accountable for their disgusting actions. Specifically, page 2, section 3-810. Lines 2B. This added amendment will benefit those in the state of Maryland.

I am a victim whose name and images were used to create social media accounts impressing me, to attract men in a sexual manner. Additionally, my father and another 20 other fellow students were affected by one person who sought to identify as us, creating over 75 fake accounts, with thousands of followers. Thus, I can attest on behalf of myself and others to the importance of this bill to prevent defamation of character, and the fear of having your name and images used for someone else's benefit. The current statute does not protect victims or severe punishment for the people responsible for these acts.

Furthermore, I believe that the implementation of this law will limit and prevent cyber crimes being committed and protect citizens personal identifying information from being mis-used.

I respectfully urge you to support this important legislation and work toward its passage. Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,
Rachel Battaglia

SB889

Uploaded by: Michael David

Position: UNF

In Opposition to passage of SB 889

Dear Senators,

I urge you to vote against SB 889. SB 889 asserts to prohibit Distribution of Student's Personal Information but it is so broad and precludes fair and open conversation by our residents.

To quote from the Bill: The purpose is prohibiting "distributing personal identifying information or images of certain students..." "Personal Identifying Information includes a person's:

(l) Name;

...

(B) A person may not intentionally distribute the personal identifying information (i.e. the name) or image of a student without the express permission with reckless disregard for the risk ..."

So, a student committing abuse may not be photographed or identified by name. Residents or parents concerned with violent behavior during student demonstrations cannot document such behavior with a photo or identifying a student by name. Might as well allow students committing certain acts to hide their identity behind hoods!

This level of protection goes way beyond not publishing, say, a Social Security number. It precludes free speech as to witnessed acts and prevents protective measures.

Please vote against this broad bill.

Michael David

Columbia, MD

SB889_USM_INFO.pdf

Uploaded by: Andy Clark

Position: INFO



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM *of* MARYLAND

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

Senate Bill 889

Criminal Law - Distribution of Students' Personal Information - Prohibition

February 26, 2020

Information

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on Senate Bill 889. The bill prohibits a person from distributing personal identifying information (PII) or images of another student with intent to harm the student. A person who violates the Act is guilty of a misdemeanor and is subject to imprisonment of up to 1 year or a fine of up to \$5,000 or both.

The University System of Maryland (USM) is composed of twelve distinguished institutions and three regional centers. We award eight out of every ten bachelor's degrees in the state. Each of USM's 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes three Historically Black Institutions, comprehensive institutions and research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.

As background for Senate Bill 889, it may be helpful to understand recent changes within USM regarding PII. In 2020, the USM supported and worked to pass [House Bill 1122](#). The bill required each public institution of higher education to review and designate systems within the respective institution as systems of record and established numerous technical specifications for the protection of institutions' information systems and PII. Broadly, each public institution of higher education must: develop and adopt a privacy governance program to govern each system of record; develop and adopt an information security and risk management program for the protection of PII; publish a privacy notice on its website; and follow specified procedures when destroying PII records; and follow specified procedures when it discovers or is notified of a breach of the security of one of its systems.

Prior to 2020's House Bill 1122, USM institutions did not have a comprehensive privacy program. The bill established requirements for the development and implementation of privacy programs systemwide. These programs give our community members and the public the ability to have greater transparency around the data we collect and give individuals greater control over the data we hold about them. The bill also requires that we provide clear privacy policies and notice so that community members know about the programs and how to access them.

The USM takes privacy and security of the information we hold seriously. In 2019, the USM convened a multi-stakeholder group of legal and technical experts to work through the best ways to address privacy and security in our communities. House Bill 1122 was the "operational schematic" of several months of discussion by many experts and conforms to the direction other

states and countries are taking related to privacy. The features in House Bill 1122 to enhance privacy across the higher education community included a broad definition of PII that captured all the different forms of information that could relate to an individual.

In addition, the bill formed a condition that institutions create a privacy program that grants individuals several rights including the right to request: a listing of the information held about an individual, the correction of information that the individual feels is inaccurate, and the deletion of information about the individual that the university may have no reason to hold.

USM and its institutions continue to review and to implement changes, as needed, to support the protection of PII. The changes in the law also require institutions to have an information security and risk management program and that the program be periodically reviewed by a third party and that each university publish a privacy notice, on the university's website, that informs individuals of their rights.



MD Catholic Conference_SB 899_FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Garrett O'Day

Position: INFO



February 19, 2025

SB 899

Education - High School Class Rankings and Guaranteed Admissions to Public Senior Institutions of Higher Education

Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Position: FAVORABLE w/ Amendments

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 899 with amendments. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government. Additionally, we offer this testimony on behalf of the families of more than 50,000 students served by over 150 PreK-12 Catholic schools in Maryland.

Senate Bill 899 would afford high-performing students a guaranteed admissions process to public institutions of higher education. Those school would include all University of Maryland institutions, St. Mary's College and Morgan State University, as well as the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.

Catholic high schools in Maryland have between a 98% - 100% graduation rate annually, and almost all of those students go on to attend institutions of higher education. Many go out of state, but many stay here at home in Maryland to achieve their higher education dreams and goals. Having a guaranteed admissions process would be hugely advantageous to our students, as well as those in the public school systems.

However, many schools do not actively publish rankings for a variety of reasons. **We respectfully request this committee to consider the following amendment to Section 7-205.2:**

Page 3, line 31: insert "NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO MAKE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ANY SYSTEM OF CLASS RANKINGS, SHALL CONVEY ON A TRANSCRIPT UPON STUDENT REQUEST A CLASS RANKING FOR ANY STUDENT APPLYING FOR GUARANTEED ADMISSION TO A PUBLIC SENIOR INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION UNDER THIS SECTION."

The Conference appreciates your consideration, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 899, with amendments.

SB 889 Distribution of Students Personal Informati

Uploaded by: Matt Power

Position: INFO



Letter of Information

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senate Bill 889 (Henson)
Criminal Law – Distribution of Students Personal Information - Prohibitions

Matt Power, President
mpower@micua.org
February 26, 2025

On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 55,000 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter of information regarding ***Senate Bill 889 (Henson) Criminal Law – Distribution of Students' Personal Information – Prohibition***. MICUA institutions expend a tremendous amount of resources and care to protect their students' personal information and commend this legislation's intent. Institutions of higher education are already required to comply with the Federal Education and Data Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Maryland Data Privacy Act. The security of personal information is a priority on every campus.

Our campuses are concerned however about some of the definitions in the bill and the broad range of activities that might potentially be covered. The bill defines “distribute” in a very expansive way, including uploading, circulating, or making information available electronically. This could inadvertently capture conduct not intended to harm students, potentially criminalizing actions such as legitimate news reporting or academic discourse.

Although the bill includes a clause stating that it “may not be construed or applied in a manner that violates an individual’s right to free speech,” the interplay between safeguarding student privacy and protecting constitutional rights is always a fine line. The current wording in SB 889 could pose a risk if the law is strictly adhered to, and as a result, it could have a chilling effect on free expression — especially in contexts where the sharing of information may be protected.

The bill establishes penalties that include imprisonment for up to one year or fines up to \$5,000, or both, for violations. While deterrence is important, these penalties seem disproportionate in instances where the harm is minimal or unintentional.

Given the complex issues involved – ranging from student privacy and safety to free speech and public accountability – we would like to work with the sponsor to better understand the need for the legislation, given existing restrictions included in FERPA and Maryland’s Data Privacy Act.