![mnadv - Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence]

BILL NO:	House Bill 803
TITLE:	Criminal Law - Revenge Porn - Computer-Generated Visual Representation
COMMITTEE:	Judiciary
HEARING DATE:	February 18, 2025
POSITION:	**SUPPORT**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the COMMITTEE to favorably Report on HB 803.**

House Bill 803 expands the current "revenge porn" statute, Criminal Law §3-809, to include a broader range of images, including "deep-fakes" and similar depictions.

Revenge Porn harms another person by distributing images of their intimate parts or sexual activities without their consent. This most typically involves former romantic partners who have shared pictures of themselves willingly and then one party shares the pictures without the consent of the other to harm, harass, intimidate, threaten, or coerce the other person. The statute was carefully crafted to balance constitutional protections for free speech and the need to prohibit harmful conduct.

The advent of AI and more sophisticated computer technology has created a need to update the current statute. It is not difficult to create sexual images of someone that are wholly made up and also indistinguishable from an actual person. These images can cause significant emotional, reputational, and financial harm.

The harms caused by use of these images, whether real or created by AI are real and include practical financial issues, such as losing job opportunities, to serious psychological harms, with some victims even attempted suicide after learning pornographic images were posted. Those viewing the image do not know whether an image is computer-generated or not, and they will make judgments about the person depicted either way. Consider the reactions of a potential

employer, a romantic partner, a family member, or others who view these graphic and vulgar images.

House Bill 803 is one of several bills this session that address this issue. House Bill 803 addresses criminal penalties. We commend you to MCASA's written testimony that lays out the other various bills and agree that creating criminal and civil avenues and consequences is vitally important.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on HB 803.**