

**THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN**

*Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect.*

*We strive to secure budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and wellbeing.*



**HB0364 – Criminal Law - Child Pornography –  
Prohibitions and Penalties  
House Judiciary Committee  
February 4, 2025**

**Position: SUPPORT**

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children is a consortium of organizations and individuals formed in 1996 who are concerned about the care of Maryland's most vulnerable children and work together to promote meaningful child welfare reform. CPMC urges **a favorable report on HB0364 - Criminal Law- Child Pornography – Prohibitions and Penalties.**

As a coalition of members dedicated to protecting children and advocating in regard to issues related to child maltreatment, CPMC recognizes the urgent need to address the growing threat of child sexual abuse material and its devastating impact on children.

The possession of child pornography is not a victimless crime. Each image or video represents the sexual abuse and exploitation of a real child. Disturbingly, the accessibility of this material online has fueled a dramatic increase in its prevalence. This alarming trend demands a strong response to protect vulnerable children and hold offenders accountable. HB0364 provides critical enhancements to Maryland law by targeting high volume offenders, protecting younger victims, and ensuring accountability.

The consequences of child pornography possession extend far beyond the initial act of abuse. Every time an image is viewed or shared, the victim is re-victimized, causing further trauma and hindering their ability to heal. HB0364 acknowledges this ongoing harm by increasing penalties and deterring the possession of these exploitative materials.

Stronger penalties serve as a powerful deterrent, discouraging individuals from engaging in the possession of child pornography. By increasing the consequences for these crimes, HB0364 sends a clear message that Maryland will not tolerate the sexual exploitation of children. Furthermore, the enhanced penalties will aid law enforcement in investigating and prosecuting offenses related to the possession of inappropriate material featuring children, leading to the removal of more offenders from our communities.

For the reasons above, the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children **urges a favorable report on HB0364 - Criminal Law- Child Pornography – Prohibitions and Penalties.**