

**February 11, 2025**

**Testimony on HB 740**  
**Election Law – Campaign Materials – Disclosure of Use of Synthetic Media**  
**Ways & Means**

**Position:** Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 740 which requires candidates to disclose the use of any deepfakes or other AI-generated media content, also known as synthetic media content, within disseminated campaign content.

Academics and researchers have been sounding the alarm about the use of synthetic media in our elections since well before the dramatic rise in interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the potential risks to democracy and national security. The public is also beginning to understand the risk posed by the use of synthetic media in our elections, with polls from [Ispos](#) and [YouGov](#) showing anywhere from 70% to 85% of people concerned about the role AI deepfakes and other AI-generated content could play in the spread of misinformation.

At the same time, research is raising concerns about the ability of viewers to recognize synthetic media when they see it. For example, a [study](#) by the Rand Corporation found that 27% to 50% of respondents were unable to distinguish deepfakes.

Synthetic media content would likely cause harm to communities that have long been targets of disinformation campaigns – from Black and brown communities, young people, those with first language is not English and those with limited mobility – as there is limited ability to combat biases as the systems used to identify this type of content can for example not [recognize darker skin tones](#).

HB 740 will mitigate these risks by requiring a disclaimer alongside the use of synthetic media in all potential forms – including still images, video, and audio. Several states like California and Texas have already taken steps to counter the use of synthetic media, and many other states have bills currently moving through their legislatures.

Disinformation is already a threat to democracy and the use of synthetic media within our elections system only builds on that danger. It is critical that the Maryland General Assembly respond promptly to this new technology to ensure our regulations address the potential for abuse that comes along with these changes. HB 740 is a step in that direction.

We urge a favorable report.