

Written Testimony in Support of HB21

TO: Members of the House Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Jennifer Hicks

Date: 2.2.2026

RE: SUPPORT for HB21 - Social Media Platforms - Vloggers and Video Content Featuring Minors (Child Influencers Protection Act)

I am writing to express strong support for HB21, the Child Influencers Protection Act. This is a bill that addresses a critical gap in our current labor laws by ensuring that children are afforded the same financial protections and rights as traditional child entertainers in the event that their images/lives are used to generate profit on social media. "Vlogging" has now grown to become a significant industry but the current laws do not reflect its increased stature; too many children have no legal guarantees over any of the revenue generated based on their likeliness. This bill fixes this by doing the following:

1. Ensuring fair compensation - a portion of a vlogger's profits must be set aside into a trust for the featured child.
2. Applying labor standards - mandates work or special permits for minors who are featured in this capacity.
3. "The Right to be Forgotten" - this will empower adults who were featured in content as children to request permanent deletion of that content from social media platforms.
4. Closing legal loopholes - this addresses the current exemption that allows parents or guardians to avoid compensating children for work performed in a family-owned business.

I do not believe this bill would result in government overreach; families will still be able to produce content about their own lives. I believe this will ensure that when that sharing becomes a commercial enterprise, the children will not be exploited for their labor. By requiring formal permits, Maryland can lead the way in protecting the financial and personal interests of the next generation of digital creators, without exploitation and future litigation amongst families.

I urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB21 to ensure our labor laws keep pace with the realities of the modern digital economy.

Respectfully,
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