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

**Testimony in Support of SB107 Distribution of Students' Personal Information -
Prohibition**

Good afternoon. My name is Riona Sheikh, and I am a student at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am here to share my experience being doxxed as vice president of my university's student government, and why protections like Senate Bill 107 are urgently needed.

On the evening of September 30, 2025, I was in the middle of writing an essay. It was due that night, and I only had a few things to wrap up before I could submit.

That's when I checked my messages. Someone sent me a link to a Twitter post.

It had thousands of likes and hundreds of comments. This was posted on an account with over 300,000 followers.

And right there was a photo of my face, and a few other students' photos, on a black background with a caption that listed our positions in the student government, our first and last names, and the words "future employers take note."

This account, "Stop Antisemitism", sought to paint me and a few other members of the University of Maryland's student government as antisemitic – a claim that's not only untrue, but that none of us had anything to do with. I believe the account chose to target us because of our high positions in the student government, and because of the color of our skin.

But I had little time to be upset about the libel. Because the comments on the account were overwhelming enough.

Hundreds upon hundreds of people were calling to deport us. Many comments were saying that we looked Muslim, calling us terrorists and terrorist sympathizers. Many comments, too, were insulting our physical appearances.

I turned off my phone because I had had enough. I had a paper to finish. And somehow, I managed to finish my paper. I barely turned it in on time. I felt weird, and I didn't know what to do. But with time, it would pass, right?

Unfortunately, I was wrong. Getting doxxed was very hard to get over.

The next day, that post was circulated on many different accounts. Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. I saw that it made it to the Atlanta Coalition of Israel.

I woke up feeling horrible, kind of dazed. I tried to go to class: I walked 20 minutes, went in the building and up the stairs and stood outside my classroom door, but I couldn't make myself go in. I had all these texts asking if I was okay, that I didn't reply to. I went to the prayer space for Muslims on campus, instead. People didn't know what to say to me.

I didn't know what to do with myself. I called a friend or two, and they told me to rest, but I didn't know how. Some people told me that it looked like the account put my photo on a hit list. And someone told me that all it would take is one person with a gun to see a post with four brown kids and our job positions, to just show up at our public student government meetings. I started to realize that if my face and job position could be shared so easily, my address or class schedule could be next. Once something like this starts, how would anyone know where it ends?

Suddenly it hit me. Anyone around me could have seen that post. I felt exposed and vulnerable. I broke down crying in public and walked all the way to my friend's apartment. I didn't want to be alone. I was there for hours. I missed my student government meeting. It was a special, meaningful meeting that I would have loved to have gone to. But I was afraid of what might happen and who might show up.

One of the worst things was telling my parents.

They knew that it would always be a risky thing for someone who looks like me to be outspoken and openly advocate for things. I had always tried to be careful before. I worded my thoughts carefully and tried to stay out of controversy. My parents worried a lot about me taking a more public-facing position, but I was so sure that everything would be fine and nothing remotely unsafe could happen to me.

I tried so hard to convince my dad not to worry. My dad has serious heart issues and health problems. He had a heart attack when I was 15, and he's never been the same. So when I got doxxed, I didn't want to tell my parents, because I didn't want to send my dad to the hospital again.

It sucked having this whole burden to carry on my own as I thought for days whether I should or shouldn't tell my parents. I felt so stressed and alone and I couldn't really go to anyone for help. I skipped class for days. I was always a straight-A student, but last semester, that got messed up. I also gained a new fear — that employers really would see this and start to think differently of me. It wasn't true, but this can't ever be taken down.

Like I said, I tried so hard to stay out of controversy. But none of that was enough to protect me.

Because if someone knows they can do something this horrible and reckless with zero consequences, what's stopping them? If there is no barrier, someone who intends to bring harm to you will surely do it. And that harm doesn't end with you. It stresses out and scares all your friends and all your loved ones.

I still don't know who did this to me. All I know is that they walk freely without consequences, while I took months to feel normal again. My entire life was thrown off rhythm by this.

I had always heard about getting doxxed. Once you live it, it's a different story.

Please, please vote in favor of SB-107. I wish something like this had existed before I got doxxed. Maybe it would've prevented this from happening to me. I still feel like all the stressful things that happen to me impact my dad's health and I just want my family and friends to be safe and happy. I'm 19 years old and my focus should be on my academics, work and friends, not on whether I feel like I'm in danger. Thank you.