

HB 693: Civil Actions - Distribution of Obscene Material to Minors: Please vote to **SUPPORT** this bill.

Dear Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **SUPPORT HB 693**.

In today's digital age, children and teens have unprecedented access to the Internet, where obscene and harmful content—often explicit pornography or violent material—can be encountered easily on unregulated platforms. Existing federal and state laws have gaps in holding large commercial entities responsible for knowingly permitting minors to view obscene material. This bill provides a targeted civil mechanism to incentivize better age verification, content filtering, and protective measures without broadly restricting free speech or imposing criminal penalties.

Protecting minors from exposure to obscene material is a fundamental public safety and child protection issue. By enabling civil lawsuits against negligent platforms, **HB 693** empowers families to seek justice when safeguards fail, promotes responsible online practices, and **helps safeguard Maryland's children from harmful content that can contribute to psychological, emotional, or developmental harm.**

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you **to vote in favor of HB 693** and support stronger civil accountability for the distribution of obscene material to minors online.

Thank you for your attention to this critical child protection legislation.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals