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BILL NUMBER: HB 924

POSITION: Support

The Maryland State's Attorneys' Association supports and seeks a favorable report on House Bill 924.

HB 924 addresses a disturbingly growing trend among child sexual offenders, namely, the production, sale, trade, and use of anatomically accurate child dolls and mannequins to simulate sexual acts against children. These dolls are manufactured primarily in overseas markets and are designed to be as lifelike as possible. Purchasers can specifically tailor skin, hair, and eye color, weight, body shape, facial features, etc. to their specific proclivities; and are designed specifically to allow adults to simulate sexual acts on them.¹

Globally, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom have banned the production, sale, and possession of these dolls. Australian authorities seized 133 dolls at customs between July 2013 to July of 2018, and prosecuted an individual in possession of such a doll in 2016.² The United Kingdom seized approximately 120 dolls between 2016 and 2017, and prosecuted 7 individuals for their importation.³ In July 2024, federal authorities serving a warrant related to distribution of CSAM seized the bottom portion of an infant sized doll as well as two child sized, lifelike sex dolls. However, the individual was only prosecuted for possession and distribution of CSAM.⁴ In 2025, the House of Representatives introduced the CREEPER Act, which in part seeks to criminalize the import, transport, distribution, purchase, or sale of child sex dolls. In October of 2025, online retail website Shein was reported to have allowed third-party retailers to buy, sell, and ship these dolls through their platform, with transactions occurring across the globe, including the United States.

¹ Brown R & Shelling J 2019. Exploring the implications of child sex dolls. Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice no. 570. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. <https://doi.org/10.52922/ti09937>

² *Id.*

³ Shaw, Danny. "The "New Phenomenon" of Child Sex Dolls." *BBC News*, 31 July 2017, www.bbc.com/news/uk-40776621. Accessed 9 Nov. 2019.

⁴ Department of Justice, 12 August 2025, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdtx/pr/mexican-citizen-sentenced-10-years-following-discovery-child-sized-dolls-and-sexual>

Currently, only Hawaii, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Utah have legislation banning such dolls. However, Maryland law has yet to specifically address this disturbingly growing trend. The current statutory scheme under Md. Criminal Law §§ 11-203, 11-207, and 11-208 criminalizes the possession and distribution of films, videotapes, photographs, other visual representations, and computer-generated content that is indistinguishable from actual and identifiable minors. However, § 11-203 *specifically* precludes drawings, cartoons, sculptures, or paintings from criminal prosecution. Child sex dolls are a physical representation of the object of a sex offender's deviant proclivities and are easily defended under the current scheme.

Use of such dolls also represents a growing trend in the study of sexual offending. Studies have indicated that viewing and possessing CSAM is a progressive cycle that particularly heightens the offender's risk of committing contact offenses. Eventually, CSAM perpetrators become desensitized to the material, first seeking out more heinous and deviant material to satisfy their sexual desires. This becomes a self-sustaining spiral that eventually leads to an offender acting out their proclivities on a live child to seek the same gratification that they use to receive from viewing CSAM.⁵ Adding sex dolls to this cycle will only heighten said desires, creating a "muscle memory" for offenders because they can carry out a physicality to representations of children. Adding additional fuel to this fire, customization of these dolls allows offenders to carry out intensely specific deviant fantasies. Offenders will become desensitized to the dolls at a higher rate, further heightening their desire to offend on an actual child.⁶

The explosion of both AI generation and 3D printing creates additional layers of complexity to law enforcement's ability to police the production, sale, distribution, and trade of these dolls. Specifically, AI generation allows anyone to create the necessary models for 3D printing, without any specified knowledge, training, or oversight. Offenders have also begun selling the blueprints for such dolls, which further proliferates the completely untraceable creation of such dolls. Home 3D printing has similarly exploded, allowing not only the home printing of tools and fidget toys, but printing of illegal, unregistered firearm parts, and now, child sex dolls.

This straightforward and common-sense legislation addressing a disturbingly fast-growing issue will immediately hold offenders accountable in line with growing global trends and protect future victims from extremely harmful and offensive conduct caused directly by the sex dolls' reinforcement of deviant behavior.

The Maryland State's Attorney's Association seeks a favorable report on HB 924.

⁵ Joe Sullivan and Anthony R. Beech, "Assessing Internet sex offenders," In Martin C. Calder (Ed.), *Child sexual abuse and the Internet: tackling the new frontier* (Lyme Regis, UK: Russell House, 2004), pp. 69-83.

⁶ Maras, Marie-Helen & Shapiro, Lauren. (2017). *Child Sex Dolls and Robots: More Than Just an Uncanny Valley*. *Journal of Internet Law*.