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Honorable Chair Bartlett and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of **CASA of Cecil County**, we submit testimony in support of **House Bill 670**.

HB 670 strengthens Maryland's criminal law by prohibiting certain conduct involving child pornography and establishing felony penalties for individuals who possess a large quantity of such material or any images depicting a minor under 13 years old. Under the bill, possession of 100 or more images under specified prohibitions, or possession of material involving very young children, is a felony punishable by up to 10 years' imprisonment.

From CASA's direct work in child welfare cases, we know that child safety must be paramount in all systems that interact with vulnerable children. Children who have experienced abuse or neglect are among the highest-risk members of our communities, and exposure to sexual exploitation compounds trauma, destabilizes families, and undermines long-term well-being. CASA volunteers frequently witness the lifelong emotional and behavioral harm that results from sexual abuse and exploitation—harm that extends far beyond the courtroom and into every aspect of a child's life.

By strengthening penalties and clarifying prohibited conduct, HB 670 enhances the state's ability to deter exploitation and hold offenders accountable, sending a clear message that Maryland will not tolerate this form of abuse.

CASA of Cecil County strongly urges a favorable report on HB 670.

Respectfully submitted,

Grant Handley
CASA of Cecil County



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