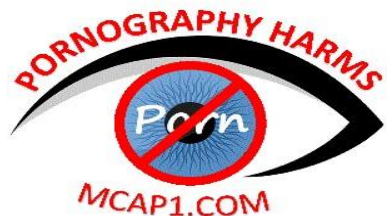


Making a Difference

The quarterly newsletter of the Maryland Coalition
Against Pornography, Inc.

MCAP Hotline: 301-439-8475

www.mcap1.com or en español: www.mcap1.com/español



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MCAP supports proposed legislation on teen sexting in MD General Assembly

[HB 194](#) (Click the link to see a PDF copy) would, commendably, require the inclusion of age-appropriate education about the risks of sexting in the Family Life and Human Sexuality curriculum.—UPDATE: This bill passed out of the House Ways and Means Committee with a favorable report! As explained in the MCAP testimony for the hearing on January 17, sexting is becoming progressively commoner among young people—at younger and younger ages, when they are often routinely trustful and lack the discernment to perceive the serious harms of explicit images. The images can be used for bullying, revenge, and “sextortion.” Parents are often unaware of what is happening on their children’s devices or are at a loss as to how to combat the malign influences. We encourage you to thank the co-sponsors, Delegates [Emily Shetty](#) and [Vanessa Atterbeary](#).




A month after the hearing, the bill passed with a favorable report out of the House Ways and Means Committee, almost unanimously (with only 1 nay vote and 1 abstention). As of February 25, the bill has also passed in the House of Delegates. Its next step takes it to the Senate. Stay tuned!

Info about this bill and other State legislation MCAP is following can be viewed at our website link, <http://mcap1.com/mcap/legislation>.

The proposed [HB 471/SB 959](#) would prohibit indecent exposure with lascivious intent in a public place in the presence of another. It further proposes altering the definition of “tier I sex offender” to include people who have been convicted of that behavior in the presence of anyone under the age of 14 and at least 4 years younger than the convicted person. [Editor’s note: The intent of the bill is not to put miscreants urinating in public on the sex-offender registry.] We could email our thanks to Del. [Jesse Pippy](#) and Sen. [Ron Watson](#). More than 1,000 instances of indecent-offense complaint were reported in Maryland last year. Since it is likely that many instances went unreported, MCAP urges legislators to take strong action. [Editor’s note: What might we guess drives that kind of behavior?]

The proposed [HB 1410/SB 162](#) would require the State Department of Education, the Behavioral Health Administration within the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Center for School Safety, and the Department of Information Technology to jointly develop and publish a cyber safety guide and training course to be implemented in public schools starting with the 2023–24 school year. The Senate bill had its hearing on Jan. 19 (no further progress as of this month). We should email Del. [Ken Kerr](#) and Sen. [Katie Fry Hester](#) with our thanks.

Parents and guardians: Are you familiar with what  (or any other emoji) means, in the context of texting and emailing? If you copy and paste an emoji into a search (for example, by means of Google Search), you will find explanations on websites such as Dictionary.com. The emoji above is defined as a drooling face (sometimes used to indicate lust or longing when it is used in a flirtatious exchange).

Overview of worrisome developments in social media

Below we reproduce excerpts from analysis in the [2021 Annual Report](#) of the Bark App*.

That powerful app was able to sift more than 3.4 billion messages to identify the ever-more-popular trends in what kids are seeing online. Here are two particularly notable statistics we found. As to sexual content: 68.97% of tweens and 90.73% of teens were encountering nudity or content of a sexual nature. Furthermore, 43.09% of tweens and 74.61% of teens were involved in a self-harm/suicidal situation.

Top 5 Social Apps/Platforms Flagged To Be Avoided



1. Kik



2. Tumblr



3. Houseparty



4. Discord



5. Twitter

Kik—A messaging app emphasizing multimedia; offers live video. For details about its dangers, click [here](#).

Tumblr—A microblog comparable to Twitter. Users briefly post their own content or share someone else's. For more on its dangers, click [here](#).

Houseparty—A game app that, like Zoom, allows one user to connect with up to eight others on a split screen. Click [here](#) for more about its dangers.

Discord—A chat app used while playing Fortnite, Minecraft, or Among Us. For more about its dangers, click [here](#).

Twitter—Perhaps the most prominent microblog. See [article](#) about Montgomery County school-provided laptops with porn exposure via Twitter. Click to see [why NCOSE put that on its Dirty Dozen list](#).

*For those unfamiliar with [Bark](#), it is a smartphone parental-control app with an award-winning dashboard that proactively monitors text messages, YouTube, emails, and more than 30 social networks for potential safety problems. It also offers screen-time management and web-filtering tools that can set healthy limits for how and when devices can be used. Bark identifies problems via automatic alerts when questionable situations arise. Furthermore, Bark accompanies its alerts with recommendations from expert child psychologists for dealing with them.

Encouraging Federal Legislation: **What Is the "EARN IT" Act?**

The **Eliminating Abusive and Rampant Neglect of Interactive Technologies Act** (EARN IT Act of 2022, [S.3538](#)) was introduced in the U.S. Senate in January as part of a bipartisan effort, sponsored by Senators Lindsay Graham (R) and Michael Blumenthal (D). We are happy to report that it was passed *unanimously* by the Senate Judiciary Committee. This bill would first, hold electronic service providers responsible if they do nothing to keep kids safe and second, require them to “earn” immunity by showing accountability and responsibility.

The EARN IT Act:

- **Removes immunity** for social media and technology companies that knowingly facilitate the distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) on their platforms.
- **Updates federal statutes** to use the term child sexual abuse material (CSAM) instead of “child pornography.” The term “child pornography” fails to describe the true nature of the images and minimizes the seriousness of the abuse.
- **Establishes a commission of survivors, technology representatives, and government stakeholders** to create recommendations and voluntary best practices for tech companies to respond to the global pandemic of online sexual exploitation of children.

Why Is This Legislation Important?

- Because of the increased use of technology by children during the pandemic and the ease of facilitating exploitation online, **offenders are growing bolder**, and they create one of the biggest challenges ever to plague the computer world.
- In 2021, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) received more than 29.3 million (**up 35% compared with 2020**) CyberTipline reports containing more than 84.9 million images, videos, and other content related to suspected child sexual exploitation (**up 29.8% compared with 2020**).

But even before the pandemic, **CSAM had already exploded**. A 2019 New York Times investigation piece, “The Internet is Overrun with Images of Child Sexual Abuse. What Went Wrong?” revealed in 2018, tech companies reported more than 45 million online photos and videos of children being sexually abused—more than double what they had found the previous year.

How Can You Help Protect Kids on the Web Right Now?

- Click here to [**contact**](#) your representatives and urge them to support the EARN IT Act.

❌ ❌

Love is RESPECT



This February, start talking about **healthy relationships!**

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

Heart graphic property of www.LetYourHeartRule.com

February is [National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month](#) (TDVAM). The statistics are very troubling. They show teen dating violence to be a problem that affects everyone—not just teens but also their parents, teachers, friends, and communities. Approximately one in three high-school students will be involved in an abusive relationship. Teens need to learn more about setting boundaries, among which are digital boundaries. Discussions should include examination of the dangers of sending illicit pictures or making illicit videos.



[NETSMARTZKIDS](#)

Creative, Free, and Fun Interactive Resources About Online Dangers
Check out Cloud Quest for interactive games, videos, coloring books, and information about online safety and using social networking responsibly. The site warns against pitfalls encountered online:

<https://www.netsmartzkids.org/activities/interactive/>

The content comes from Netsmartzkids.org, an interactive educational program from the

trustworthy National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC). Topics include warnings about sharing too much information online, sexting, cyberbullying, predators, and chat rooms. *Cloud Chaos*, for example (to see a YouTube trailer, click [here](#)), is a downloadable game in which an antagonist is spreading bad content around in an alternate reality called Badromeda. The players (mostly youths) are encouraged to help the protagonist characters, Nettie and Webster, clean up their environment before it's too late.

Join Us on Facebook

Keep up with late-breaking news and action items by following MCAP on Facebook, where links are posted in a timelier way. There, you will find

- Notifications of upcoming webinars and helpful articles, such as “Risks and Responses to Children Sending or Receiving Explicit Material Online” (video recording, available until March 16)
- Videos, such as [Why Porn Is More Dangerous Than You Think!](#) (on escaping addiction to pornography), featuring Jordan Peterson.
- Eye-opening articles, such as
 - [7 Ways Porn Kills Marriage—Plus Tips for Talking to Your Teens](#)
 - [5 Ways You Can Help Fight Human Sex Trafficking in Your Daily Life](#)
 - [iOS update: Apple will notify kids \(but not their parents\) if they receive nude photos](#)
 - [The Best Starter Phone for Kids: A Guide for Families](#)—a review of several types of cell phones for beginners (such as Pinwheel, Gabb, KidzConnect, and Palm).

ACTION BOX

S.O.S.

MCAP is in great need of board members, We also need administrative help, with matters such as emailing and social media outreach. Help is especially needed with computer-screen tasks. Peggy Cairns, MCAP’s newsletter editor and emailer, needs to reduce her screen time on account of her eye ailments (retina and cataract problems). If you can help, please call Peggy Cairns at 301-439-8475 or email mcapinc@mcap1.com. Everyone is welcome to attend monthly meetings. No travel necessary; it is easy to attend, because all meetings are virtual (thanks to Zoom).



If you are on Facebook, please “like” [MCAP’s page](#), keep current on issues MCAP is following, and share with others.

Making a Difference is published quarterly online and printed once a year. Editor: Peggy Cairns; copyeditor: Cary Hoagland. A membership in MCAP is \$15 per year. This entitles you to receive the annual printed newsletter. All contributions to MCAP are tax deductible. Please send renewal payments to: M.C.A.P., P.O. Box 2868, Silver Spring, MD 20915-2868 or use Paypal by clicking [here](#). Donations are greatly appreciated!