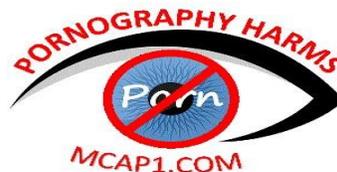


Making a Difference

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



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

MCAP Hotline: 301-439-8475

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SB 226 - Finally Passed and Signed Into Law



Left to right - Seated: Bill Ferguson, Pres. Of the Senate, Governor Wes Moore, Speaker of the House Adrienne Jones
Standing: Senator Bill Folden, **Joyce King*** - [see article below], Frederick State's Attorney office, General Counsel, Senator Luke Clippinger, Senator and lead sponsor of SB 226, Johnny Ray Salling, Delegate Robin Grammer, lead sponsor of cross-filed bill, HB 233, Lisae Jordan, MCASA, Heather Lewis (victim's mother), and Peggy Cairns, MCAP.

Up until the 11th hour, on the last day (sine die) of the 2023 General Assembly legislative session, April 10, Maryland law had not caught up with web-based video technology, and people could livestream child porn or save it to dropboxes or other cloud-based storage and be able to avoid prosecution. There was a giant loophole in Maryland's state law with quite an escape hatch for criminals! Since streaming technically is not possessing, charges could not be brought if the images or videos weren't downloaded. Our code needed to be aligned with other, better-worded state laws and federal law. "It's a little bit sick, it's a little bit surprising but Maryland is really a sanctuary for child pornography right now," said Del. Grammer.

Efforts to remedy that had gotten underway via 2 cross-filed bills, HB 233, sponsored by Delegate [Robin Grammer](#) (R) and [SB 226](#), sponsored by Senator [Johnny Ray Salling](#) (R), Of District 6, Baltimore, with hearings in early February. The crime and the loophole in the law was brought to their attention by [Scott Shellenberger](#), Baltimore State's Attorney, out of investigation of the abuse perpetrated, by a family member, on the 6-year-old daughter of their constituent, Heather Lewis. Children of Maryland can be thankful for Mrs. Lewis's courageous testimony at the hearings. Three [MCAP'ers testified](#) in support - Peggy Cairns, Rachel Delap and Brikena Kay - where we pointed out the alarming and increasing statistics related to child sexual abuse material, and the especially horrific aspect of the live-streaming of this crime, in that some viewers can call in to the child trafficker who is operating a live cam and allowing for requests as to what they want done to the child.

Others in support included Lisae Jordan, Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA), Joyce King of the Frederick County State's Attorney's Office and the Office of the Attorney General and others. Little apparent action was taken until well into March, when *bipartisan* momentum began, as ten other delegates (Arikan, Bartlett, Embry, Kaufman, Munoz, Pasteur, Phillips, Schmidt, Simpson, and Valentine) joined in as co-sponsors. The House Judiciary Committee and the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee finally acted, over a month later, reporting the bills out favorably. It dragged on, with the House voting *unanimously* in favor first, then nearly at the last hours of the session, rather incredibly, the Senate ultimately also voted *unanimously in favor*. To have **no** NAY votes is rare, and a testament to the great and very incontrovertible, apparent need for this change in wording: ...prohibiting a person from **knowingly or intentionally accessing and intentionally viewing** a certain visual representation of a child under the age of 16 years.

Why not write a THANK YOU to all who worked toward passage of this important legislation?

Separately, [HB1082](#), a bill MCAP was hoping to see progress, did not move out of committee, but we hope it will be re-introduced next year. Its intent: to require a manufacturer of a tablet or smart phone sold in MD to automatically enable, by default, filtering that prevents the user from accessing or downloading material that is harmful to minors. Thanks to Del. McComas for trying!

The 2023 [Dirty Dozen List](#) has been published. Read more about it on NCOSE's website: [DirtyDozenList.com](#). There you can easily click on links to petitions and be able to add your name to letters to the corporate executives or other authorities to urge corrective actions.



Thanks to donors, MCAP was able to run this mobile truck ad for a week during March, of which several days were at key intersections in Annapolis, placed strategically where legislators, government officials and their staffs would see it, and then others days around Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties, at shopping centers or near schools and churches. The QR code was included with the hope it could enable viewers to quickly link to our website and see recommended actions they could take. An evaluation of statistics related to our web page did reflect a spike of “hits” on our web page.



WARNING FROM THE PARENTS TELEVISION COUNCIL ABOUT HBO OFFERINGS

On June 4, HBO will release "The Idol" from "Euphoria" creator Sam Levinson, which *Rolling Stone* describes as even "darker, crazier, and more risqué" than Euphoria! The Idol stars popular entertainers Lily-Rose Depp and The Weeknd – all but guaranteeing a huge following of young fans. We are sounding the alarm NOW, before even one episode airs, so that parents will know to keep their precious and impressionable children and teens far away from this series.

Sam Levinson is known for his raunchy, explicit, boundary-pushing programming -- and HBO's marketing for The Idol proves that this series will be no different. Even *Rolling Stone* magazine has called The Idol 'twisted torture p*rn.' Share this warning with other parents.

“Euphoria” featured high-school aged characters doing drugs and engaging in self-destructive behavior; it has depicted child rape, full-frontal male and female nudity of both adult and child characters, pornography use by teen and adult characters, and frequent expletives (714 uses of the 'f-word' over 8 episodes). Euphoria has been touted by HBO as its "youngest-skewing drama series." Euphoria has normalized these destructive behaviors and marketed them to impressionable teens and children. No doubt HBO will do the same with “The Idol.”

Virginia will require age verification to access porn sites

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin signed a bill passed in March that requires users to verify they are 18 years old through advanced verification methods to enter pornographic websites. Like similar efforts in Utah and Louisiana, the intent is to protect children from being exposed to adult content. Under the bill, SB 1515, adult websites must require users to provide government-issued IDs, biometric scans or submit to age verification software. This new law is for websites where at least 33.3% of its content can be considered “material harmful to minors.” [WTOP article [here](#).] If you believe Maryland ought to do the same and would like to get involved, please contact us at mcapinc@mcap1.com.

***Meet Joyce King!**



MCAP salutes Joyce King for her instrumental part in the passage of SB 226, mentioned above, and for her history in protecting Maryland children and prosecuting those who prey on them. Joyce is a first generation Filipino American, currently residing in Montgomery County, Maryland. She is the Chief Counsel at the Frederick County State's Attorney's Office. She leads the Frederick County Cybercrimes Task Force, serves on the Maryland Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, and is cross designated as a Special Assistant United States Attorney through the Department of Justice Project Safe Childhood. In addition to prosecution of child exploitation crimes over the last ten years, she serves on the Legislative Committee for the Maryland State's Attorney Association. Joyce was instrumental in the passage of SB 226 this year and has assisted in the past with expanding Maryland laws on child pornography and human trafficking. She is also a board member for the National District Attorneys Association Digital Safety Advisory Board and on the NCMEC (National Council for Missing and Exploited Children) Law Enforcement Advisory Council. She also has started her own non-profit, safe childhood Project [LIGTAS BATA](#).

In speaking with Joyce, MCAP heard some encouraging notes - Frederick County is expanding its task force beyond child exploitation toward combating human trafficking and helping all of Western Maryland. Also, regarding investigations into internet crimes involving child porn, there is good and bad news. Advances in computer technology have pluses and minuses. There are forensic artifacts showing that the child abuse images do exist, and tracking is possible. Unfortunately, with end-to-end encryption launching across most social media/internet platforms, investigations are becoming harder.

MCAP will be eager to support Ms. King's future plans and ideas. There had been a bill, SB 899, intended to increase criminal penalties that can be brought against people who possess especially large amounts of child sexual abuse material. This threshold concept is already a part of federal law, but not yet in our MD code. Scrutiny also ought to be particularly focused on instances of the abuse of infants & toddlers. That bill, sponsored by Senator Mary Delaney James (R -Harford County), did not progress this year, but will be attempted again next year. Joyce will continue partnering with Frederick County public schools as a speaker on internet safety, together with a detective, as she did in health ed classrooms at 3 middle schools since 2019. MCAP THANKS YOU FOR YOUR EXEMPLARY WORK! [Jking1@statesattorney.us](#)

IN OTHER GOOD NEWS

In February, [Google announced](#) that it would automatically blur sexually explicit images in search results. Also, mainstream social media companies are refusing to provide Pornhub with a platform for implicit advertising. Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have all agreed to remove Pornhub's account, after NCOSE shared evidence of criminality and how Pornhub is violating the platforms' policies. See more such good news in [NCOSE's Gratitude Report](#).

ACTION BOX

- ❖ MCAP is in great need of board members and administrative help, e.g. newsletter editing, legislative, graphic design, fundraising and social media outreach! **Please** call Peggy Cairns, 301-910-1534, or email mcapinc@mcap1.com if you wish to serve. Monthly Zoom meetings are easy to attend, usually on a Wed. afternoon or evening.
- ❖ Could your child's school use a speaker to talk about Internet dangers? Contact Officer [Joe Dugan](mailto:joseph.dugan@maryland.gov) at joseph.dugan@maryland.gov. He has been a member of the state Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, and is well-experienced in doing this, with rave reviews.

May is **Mental Health Awareness Month**, a time to recognize how mental health impacts our lives, reduce the stigma, and support those who need it. Earlier this month, the U.S. Surgeon General confirmed a loneliness epidemic, and in February a CDC report shed light on the mental health crisis among teen girls. While there are many factors impacting the mental health of youth today, our hypersexualized digital world certainly plays a major role. The [May newsletter of "Cultured Reframed"](#) explores how pornography impacts the mental health of adolescents and parents and caregivers can do to help kids build resilience to sexually explicit content.

Having open and honest conversations is critical. The free courses from Culture Reframed for parents offer guidance on how to broach the subject. Step-by-step guides will help parents and caregivers develop the confidence to support young people as they navigate the tricky terrain of hypersexualized culture.

1. The [Program for Parents of Tweens](#), for kids aged 9 to 12 years old.
2. The [Program for Parents of Teens](#), for kids aged 13 to 18 years old.