

SENATE BILL 360

D3
SB 858/24 – JPR

5lr0837

By: **Senators Hester and Smith**
Introduced and read first time: January 17, 2025
Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Revenge Porn – Civil Action and Criminal Offense**

3 FOR the purpose of authorizing a person to bring and maintain a civil action for defamation
4 under certain circumstances; prohibiting a person from knowingly distributing a
5 certain computer-generated visual representation of another under certain
6 circumstances; and generally relating to a civil action and criminal offense for
7 revenge porn.

8 BY adding to
9 Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings
10 Section 3–505
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
14 Article – Criminal Law
15 Section 3–809
16 Annotated Code of Maryland
17 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

18 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
19 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

20 **Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings**

21 **3–505.**

22 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
23 INDICATED.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(2) "COMPUTER-GENERATED VISUAL REPRESENTATION" INCLUDES:

(I) A VISUAL REPRESENTATION CREATED WITHOUT USING
OTHER EXISTING VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF A PERSON; AND

(II) A VISUAL REPRESENTATION CREATED USING OTHER
EXISTING VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF A PERSON WITHOUT THE PERSON'S
CONSENT.

(3) "DISTRIBUTE" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 3-809 OF THE
CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE.

(4) (I) "INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM AN ACTUAL VISUAL
REPRESENTATION OF THE PERSON" MEANS THAT AN ORDINARY PERSON WOULD
CONCLUDE THAT THE VISUAL REPRESENTATION IS AN ACTUAL VISUAL
REPRESENTATION OF THE PERSON.

(II) "INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM AN ACTUAL VISUAL
REPRESENTATION OF THE PERSON" INCLUDES A COMPUTER-GENERATED VISUAL
REPRESENTATION THAT HAS BEEN CREATED, ADAPTED, OR MODIFIED TO APPEAR
GENUINE.

(III) "INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM AN ACTUAL VISUAL
REPRESENTATION OF THE PERSON" DOES NOT INCLUDE IMAGES OR ITEMS
DEPICTING A PERSON THAT ARE:

1. DRAWINGS;
2. CARTOONS;
3. SCULPTURES; OR
4. PAINTINGS.

(5) "INTIMATE PARTS" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 3-809 OF THE
CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE.

(6) "SEXUAL ACTIVITY" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 3-809 OF THE
CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE.

(B) A PERSON MAY BRING AND MAINTAIN A CIVIL ACTION FOR DEFAMATION
PER SE AGAINST ANOTHER WHO DISTRIBUTES A COMPUTER-GENERATED VISUAL
REPRESENTATION THAT IS INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM AN ACTUAL VISUAL

1 REPRESENTATION OF THE PERSON AND FALSELY DEPICTS THE PERSON WITH HIS OR
2 HER INTIMATE PARTS EXPOSED OR ENGAGED IN SEXUAL ACTIVITY.

3 (C) IN ADDITION TO OTHER RELIEF, THE COURT MAY AWARD REASONABLE
4 ATTORNEY'S FEES TO A PREVAILING PLAINTIFF.

5 Article – Criminal Law

6 3–809.

7 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

8 (2) “COMPUTER–GENERATED VISUAL REPRESENTATION” INCLUDES:

9 (I) A VISUAL REPRESENTATION CREATED WITHOUT USING
10 OTHER EXISTING VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF A PERSON; AND

11 (II) A VISUAL REPRESENTATION CREATED USING OTHER
12 EXISTING VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF A PERSON WITHOUT THE PERSON'S
13 CONSENT.

14 (3) “Distribute” means to give, sell, transfer, disseminate, publish, upload,
15 circulate, broadcast, make available, allow access to, or engage in any other form of
16 transmission, electronic or otherwise.

17 [(3)] (4) “Harm” means:

18 (i) physical injury;

19 (ii) serious emotional distress; or

20 (iii) economic damages.

21 (5) (I) “INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM ANOTHER ACTUAL AND
22 IDENTIFIABLE PERSON” MEANS THAT AN ORDINARY PERSON WOULD CONCLUDE
23 THAT THE VISUAL REPRESENTATION IS OF AN ACTUAL AND IDENTIFIABLE PERSON.

24 (II) “INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM ANOTHER ACTUAL AND
25 IDENTIFIABLE PERSON” INCLUDES A COMPUTER–GENERATED VISUAL
26 REPRESENTATION THAT HAS BEEN CREATED, ADAPTED, OR MODIFIED TO APPEAR
27 AS AN ACTUAL AND IDENTIFIABLE PERSON.

28 (III) “INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM ANOTHER ACTUAL AND
29 IDENTIFIABLE PERSON” DOES NOT INCLUDE VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OR ITEMS
30 DEPICTING A PERSON THAT ARE:

- 1 **1. DRAWINGS;**
- 2 **2. CARTOONS;**
- 3 **3. SCULPTURES; OR**
- 4 **4. PAINTINGS.**

5 ~~[(4)]~~ **(6)** “Intimate parts” means the naked genitals, pubic area, buttocks,
6 or female nipple.

7 ~~[(5)]~~ **(7)** “Sexual activity” means:

- 8 (i) sexual intercourse, including genital–genital, oral–genital,
9 anal–genital, or oral–anal;
- 10 (ii) masturbation; or
- 11 (iii) sadomasochistic abuse.

12 (b) (1) This section does not apply to:

- 13 (i) lawful and common practices of law enforcement, the reporting
14 of unlawful conduct, or legal proceedings; or
- 15 (ii) situations involving voluntary exposure in public or commercial
16 settings.

17 (2) An interactive computer service, as defined in 47 U.S.C. § 230(f)(2), is
18 not liable under this section for content provided by another person.

19 (c) **(1)** A person may not knowingly distribute a visual representation of
20 another identifiable person that displays the other person with his or her intimate parts
21 exposed or while engaged in an act of sexual activity:

22 ~~[(1)]~~ **(I)** with the intent to harm, harass, intimidate, threaten, or coerce
23 the other person;

24 ~~[(2) (i)]~~ **(II)** **1.** under circumstances in which the person knew that
25 the other person did not consent to the distribution; or

26 ~~[(ii)]~~ **2.** with reckless disregard as to whether the person
27 consented to the distribution; and

1 [(3)] (III) under circumstances in which the other person had a reasonable
2 expectation that the image would remain private.

3 (2) A PERSON MAY NOT KNOWINGLY DISTRIBUTE A
4 COMPUTER-GENERATED VISUAL REPRESENTATION THAT IS INDISTINGUISHABLE
5 FROM ANOTHER ACTUAL AND IDENTIFIABLE PERSON THAT DISPLAYS THE OTHER
6 PERSON WITH HIS OR HER INTIMATE PARTS EXPOSED OR WHILE ENGAGED IN AN ACT
7 OF SEXUAL ACTIVITY:

8 (I) WITH THE INTENT TO HARM, HARASS, INTIMIDATE,
9 THREATEN, OR COERCE THE OTHER PERSON; AND

10 (II) 1. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE PERSON
11 KNEW THAT THE OTHER PERSON DID NOT CONSENT TO THE DISTRIBUTION; OR

12 2. WITH RECKLESS DISREGARD AS TO WHETHER THE
13 PERSON CONSENTED TO THE DISTRIBUTION.

14 (d) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction
15 is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 2 years or a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or both.

16 (e) A person who violates this section is subject to § 5–106(b) of the Courts Article.

17 (f) A visual representation AND A COMPUTER-GENERATED VISUAL
18 REPRESENTATION of a victim that is part of a court record for a case arising from a
19 prosecution under this section:

20 (1) subject to item (2) of this subsection, may not be made available for
21 public inspection; and

22 (2) except as otherwise ordered by the court, may only be made available
23 for inspection in relation to a criminal charge under this section to:

24 (i) court personnel;

25 (ii) a jury in a criminal case brought under this section;

26 (iii) the State's Attorney or the State's Attorney's designee;

27 (iv) the Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee;

28 (v) a law enforcement officer;

29 (vi) the defendant or the defendant's attorney; or

30 (vii) the victim or the victim's attorney.

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, if any provision of this Act or
2 the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid for any reason in a
3 court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or any other
4 application of this Act that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application,
5 and for this purpose the provisions of this Act are declared severable.

6 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
7 1, 2025.