

# HOUSE BILL 544

E1, E2

4lr1944  
CF SB 391

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By: **Delegates Atterbeary, Crutchfield, Forbes, Grammer, Pasteur, Simpson, Stein, ~~and Toles~~ Toles, Arian, Kaufman, and Williams**

Introduced and read first time: January 24, 2024

Assigned to: Judiciary

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 7, 2024

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Criminal Law – Sexual Extortion, Stalking, and Revenge Porn – Statute of**  
3 **Limitations and In Banc Review**

4 FOR the purpose of altering the statute of limitations applicable to the crimes of sexual  
5 extortion and stalking; providing that the State may institute a prosecution for  
6 ~~sexual extortion, stalking, or~~ revenge porn at any time; providing that, for purposes  
7 of the Maryland Constitution, a person who commits ~~sexual extortion, stalking, or~~  
8 revenge porn shall be deemed to have committed a misdemeanor whose punishment  
9 is confinement in the penitentiary and may reserve a point or question for a certain  
10 in banc review; and generally relating to sexual extortion, stalking, and revenge  
11 porn.

12 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
13 Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings  
14 Section 5–106(a) and (b)  
15 Annotated Code of Maryland  
16 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

17 BY adding to  
18 Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings  
19 Section 5–106(gg) and (hh)  
20 Annotated Code of Maryland  
21 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
 2 Article – Criminal Law  
 3 Section ~~3–709, 3–802, and 3–809~~  
 4 Annotated Code of Maryland  
 5 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

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

8 **Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings**

9 5–106.

10 (a) Except as provided by this section, § 1–303 of the Environment Article, and §  
 11 8–1815 of the Natural Resources Article, a prosecution for a misdemeanor shall be  
 12 instituted within 1 year after the offense was committed.

13 (b) Notwithstanding § 9–103(a)(3) of the Correctional Services Article or any  
 14 other provision of the Code, if a statute provides that a misdemeanor is punishable by  
 15 imprisonment in the penitentiary or that a person is subject to this subsection:

16 (1) The State may institute a prosecution for the misdemeanor at any time;  
 17 and

18 (2) For purposes of the Maryland Constitution, the person:

19 (i) Shall be deemed to have committed a misdemeanor whose  
 20 punishment is confinement in the penitentiary; and

21 (ii) May reserve a point or question for in banc review as provided  
 22 under Article IV, § 22 of the Maryland Constitution.

23 **(GG) THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS FOR THE PROSECUTION OF THE CRIME**  
 24 **OF SEXUAL EXTORTION IN VIOLATION OF § 3–709 OF THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE**  
 25 **IS 5 YEARS.**

26 **(HH) THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS FOR THE PROSECUTION OF THE CRIME**  
 27 **OF STALKING IN VIOLATION OF § 3–802 OF THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE IS 10**  
 28 **YEARS.**

29 **Article – Criminal Law**

30 ~~3–709.~~

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

1           ~~(2) "Intimate parts" has the meaning stated in § 3-809 of this title.~~

2           ~~(3) "Sexual activity" has the meaning stated in § 3-809 of this title.~~

3           ~~(b) A person may not cause another to:~~

4           ~~(1) engage in an act of sexual activity by threatening to:~~

5                   ~~(i) accuse any person of a crime or of anything that, if true, would~~  
6 ~~bring the person into contempt or disrepute;~~

7                   ~~(ii) cause physical injury to a person;~~

8                   ~~(iii) inflict emotional distress on a person;~~

9                   ~~(iv) cause economic damage to a person; or~~

10                  ~~(v) cause damage to the property of a person; or~~

11           ~~(2) engage as a subject in the production of a visual representation or~~  
12 ~~performance that depicts the other with the other's intimate parts exposed or engaging in~~  
13 ~~or simulating an act of sexual activity by threatening to:~~

14                   ~~(i) accuse any person of a crime or of anything that, if true, would~~  
15 ~~bring the person into contempt or disrepute;~~

16                   ~~(ii) cause physical injury to a person;~~

17                   ~~(iii) inflict emotional distress on a person;~~

18                   ~~(iv) cause economic damage to a person; or~~

19                   ~~(v) cause damage to the property of a person.~~

20           ~~(c) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction~~  
21 ~~is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 10 years or a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or both.~~

22           ~~(d) A sentence imposed under this section may be separate from and consecutive~~  
23 ~~to or concurrent with a sentence for any crime based on the act establishing the violation~~  
24 ~~of this section.~~

25           ~~(e) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS SUBJECT TO § 5-106(B) OF~~  
26 ~~THE COURTS ARTICLE.~~

27           ~~(F) A visual representation depicting a victim that is part of a court record for a~~  
28 ~~case arising from a prosecution under this section.~~

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

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

~~(i) court personnel;~~

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

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

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

~~(v) a law enforcement officer;~~

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

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

~~§ 802.~~

~~(a) In this section:~~

~~(1) "stalking" means a malicious course of conduct that includes approaching or pursuing another where:~~

~~(i) the person intends to place or knows or reasonably should have known the conduct would place another in reasonable fear:~~

~~1. A. of serious bodily injury;~~

~~B. of an assault in any degree;~~

~~C. of rape or sexual offense as defined by §§ 3-303 through 3-308 of this title or attempted rape or sexual offense in any degree;~~

~~D. of false imprisonment; or~~

~~E. of death; or~~

~~2. that a third person likely will suffer any of the acts listed in item 1 of this item; or~~

~~(ii) the person intends to cause or knows or reasonably should have known that the conduct would cause serious emotional distress to another; and~~

1           ~~(2) “stalking” includes conduct described in item (1) of this subsection that~~  
 2 ~~occurs:~~

3                     ~~(i) in person;~~

4                     ~~(ii) by electronic communication, as defined in § 3-805 of this~~  
 5 ~~subtitle; or~~

6                     ~~(iii) through the use of a device that can pinpoint or track the location~~  
 7 ~~of another without the person’s knowledge or consent.~~

8           ~~(b) The provisions of this section do not apply to conduct that is:~~

9                     ~~(1) performed to ensure compliance with a court order;~~

10                    ~~(2) performed to carry out a specific lawful commercial purpose; or~~

11                    ~~(3) authorized, required, or protected by local, State, or federal law.~~

12           ~~(c) A person may not engage in stalking.~~

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

15           ~~(e) A sentence imposed under this section may be separate from and consecutive~~  
 16 ~~to or concurrent with a sentence for any other crime based on the acts establishing a~~  
 17 ~~violation of this section.~~

18           ~~(F) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS SUBJECT TO § 5-106(B) OF~~  
 19 ~~THE COURTS ARTICLE.~~

20 3-809.

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

22                     (2) “Distribute” means to give, sell, transfer, disseminate, publish, upload,  
 23 circulate, broadcast, make available, allow access to, or engage in any other form of  
 24 transmission, electronic or otherwise.

25                     (3) “Harm” means:

26                       (i) physical injury;

27                       (ii) serious emotional distress; or

28                       (iii) economic damages.

1                   (4)    “Intimate parts” means the naked genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or  
2 female nipple.

3                   (5)    “Sexual activity” means:

4                           (i)    sexual intercourse, including genital–genital, oral–genital,  
5 anal–genital, or oral–anal;

6                           (ii)   masturbation; or

7                           (iii)   sadomasochistic abuse.

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

9                           (i)    lawful and common practices of law enforcement, the reporting  
10 of unlawful conduct, or legal proceedings; or

11                           (ii)   situations involving voluntary exposure in public or commercial  
12 settings.

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

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

18                           (1)    with the intent to harm, harass, intimidate, threaten, or coerce the  
19 other person;

20                           (2)   (i)    under circumstances in which the person knew that the other  
21 person did not consent to the distribution; or

22                                   (ii)   with reckless disregard as to whether the person consented to the  
23 distribution; and

24                           (3)    under circumstances in which the other person had a reasonable  
25 expectation that the image would remain private.

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

28           (e)    **A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS SUBJECT TO § 5–106(B) OF**  
29 **THE COURTS ARTICLE.**

30           (F)    A visual representation of a victim that is part of a court record for a case  
31 arising from a prosecution under this section:

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

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

5 (i) court personnel;

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

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

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

9 (v) a law enforcement officer;

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

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

12 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
13 October 1, 2024.

Approved:

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Governor.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.

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President of the Senate.