



February 4, 2026

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
Attn: Rory Nolan
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB 145 - "Election Misinformation, Election Disinformation, and Deepfakes" (Favorable with Amendments)

Dear Chair Wells and Members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee:

On behalf of the Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA), I write to respectfully support HB 145 with amendments, in advance of the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee hearing on February 4, 2026. CCIA is an international, not-for-profit trade association representing a broad cross-section of communications and technology firms.¹ CCIA represents leading communications and technology companies that provide services and tools relied upon by millions of Maryland residents, businesses, and creators.

The Association appreciates the bill's intent to address the use of materially deceptive media in political content and ensuring that creators who intentionally generate and distribute such content should have a clear obligation to provide appropriate disclosures. Thoughtfully crafted guardrails can help protect Maryland voters while preserving innovation, free expression, and the open internet.

Amendments to HB 145 will ensure consistency with federal law.

To achieve these goals, it is critical that HB 145 clearly limits liability to the bad actors who create and disseminate materially deceptive political media. Liability should rest solely with the person responsible for the unlawful conduct, not with intermediaries that merely host, transmit, or provide tools used to create or share content.

Because of this, we urge the Committee to align HB 145 with the longstanding federal framework established under Section 230 of the Communications Act. Any state laws in this area must be consistent with federal exemptions that limit intermediary liability for third-party content. CCIA respectfully requests that the following language be added to the bill:

“This section does not impose liability upon the following entities as a result of content provided by another person:

- An interactive computer service, as defined in 47 U.S.C. § 230;
- An interactive computer service provider, cloud provider, or telecommunications network.”

¹ For more than 50 years, CCIA has promoted open markets, open systems, and open networks. CCIA members employ more than 1.6 million workers, invest more than \$100 billion in research and development, and contribute trillions of dollars in productivity to the global economy. A list of CCIA members is available at <https://www.ccianet.org/members>.



Amendments to HB 145 will preserve important work to prevent fraud.

In addition, we recommend adding explicit language to clarify that the sharing or analysis of deepfake or deceptive media for defensive, investigative, compliance or protective purposes does not constitute prohibited dissemination. Security teams, fraud analysts, researchers, and law enforcement partners must routinely collect and study malicious content in order to protect the public against scams. Additionally, internet users may use online forums to discuss and share images in order to confirm if they are AI-generated. The bill should not apply to these practices, as they are not malicious in intent.

Without such clarity, important efforts to combat fraud, disrupt criminal networks, preserve evidence, protect users, and secure digital systems could be thwarted. Failure to add these clarifications also risks enabling bad actors to exploit uncertainty and operate with less risk of detection.

Specifically, we suggest that the following language be added to the bill:

“This Act shall not restrict the ability of a person to detect, prevent, respond to, or protect against security incidents, identity theft, fraud, harassment, malicious or deceptive activities or any illegal activity, preserve the integrity or security of systems or investigate, report, or prosecute those responsible for any such action.”

With these targeted amendments, HB 145 can more effectively address deceptive political media while preserving critical legal protections for intermediaries, supporting cybersecurity and antifraud efforts, and maintaining alignment with federal law.

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Thank you for the opportunity to share our views. CCIA looks forward to continuing to work with the Committee on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Megan Stokes
State Policy Director
Computer & Communications Industry Association