



**Testimony for the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**February 19, 2020**

TONI HOLNESS  
PUBLIC POLICY DIRECTOR

**SB 569 Intercepted Communications - Penalties and Admissibility of Evidence**

AMERICAN CIVIL  
LIBERTIES UNION  
FOUNDATION OF  
MARYLAND

**UNFAVORABLE**

MAIN OFFICE  
& MAILING ADDRESS  
3600 CLIPPER MILL ROAD  
SUITE 350  
BALTIMORE, MD 21211  
T/410-889-8555  
or 240-274-5295  
F/410-366-7838

The ACLU of Maryland respectfully urges an unfavorable report on SB 569, which would repeal the incarceration penalty from violations of the wiretap law and add a one-party consent exception to the wiretap law to allow evidence collected in violation of the wiretap statute to be admitted in a criminal proceeding.

FIELD OFFICE  
6930 CARROLL AVENUE  
SUITE 610  
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912  
T/240-274-5295

Maryland's two-party consent wiretap statute is critical for protecting the privacy of everyday Marylanders. While the two-party consent law limits your ability to record other people, the opposite is also true. Existing law protects your right to privacy by preventing others from recording you without your consent. We cannot have one protection without the other restriction.

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Further, while Maryland's current wiretap law predates many technological advances, like phone and doorbell cameras, the importance of protecting Marylanders' privacy rights has not changed.

The current exclusionary rule which prevents admissibility of evidence serves to deter persons from eavesdropping and recording others. Should the exclusionary rule be repealed, as proposed in SB 569, there would be little left to prevent surreptitious recordings of all of us.

Finally, we urge the committee to consider this bill in light of the government's history of misusing surveillance technologies, especially in the criminal context, from cell-phone tracking, to stingrays, to facial recognition technology.

We take no position on the provision of the bill which repeals the incarceration penalty.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on SB 569.