

## The Importance of Protecting Victims of Non-Consensual Recordings: Why We Need HB 602

By Rep. Bob Freeman, (D-Nashville)

621 words

As a lawmaker, one of my core responsibilities is to listen to the concerns of my community and take meaningful action to address the issues that affect the lives of everyday people. In Tennessee, one of those issues has been the growing concern over non-consensual recordings, particularly in the context of intimate relationships. Women have become victims of a disturbing and invasive crime. That's why [HB 602 was introduced](#), the "Voyeurism Victims Act," a bill designed to provide more justice for victims of hidden cameras and unauthorized recordings.

This legislation was born from the stories of women who were secretly recorded during intimate moments—women like [Erika Thomas, who was unable to seek justice because the statute of limitations had already passed](#). This is a reality that far too many victims face in our digital age, where technology makes it easier to commit such offenses but harder to hold offenders accountable once the damage is done.

HB 602 aims to change that by addressing the statute of limitations. Under current law, the start of the [statute of limitations](#) begins when the crime occurs, not when the victim learns they've been harmed. In cases of non-consensual recording, many victims often have no idea they've been filmed until years later. Our bill changes the law so that the statute of limitations starts when the victim discovers the crime, regardless of when it was committed. This [one change](#) ensures that those who violate people's privacy in this manner won't escape justice due to the victim not realizing the crime until much later.

In addition to extending the statute of limitations, HB 602 also proposes that offenders who target multiple victims should face stronger legal penalties. The bill would classify these offenses as an [E felony](#) if there are multiple victims involved. This stronger penalty reflects the crime's severity and shows we won't tolerate exploitation through hidden cameras or non-consensual recordings. The goal in making it a felony is to increase the consequences for offenders, deterring future violations and protecting victims.

Some might ask why this issue requires such urgent attention. The answer is simple: technology is advancing, and so are the ways in which criminals exploit it. With the advent of smartphones, smart devices, and hidden cameras, it's easier than ever for perpetrators to invade someone's privacy without their knowledge. Women who were once vulnerable to physical assault now find themselves at risk of digital assault. When these videos go viral, they can leave a permanent scar on the victim's life. The damage to the victim's reputation, sense of safety, and personal well-being can be devastating.

HB 602 is about more than punishment; it also seeks to empower victims by giving them the legal tools they need to seek justice, even if they only learn about the crime years after

it was committed. Privacy is a fundamental right, and no one should ever have to fear being secretly recorded during intimate moments. By supporting HB 602, we are standing up for those who have been harmed and ensuring that those who would commit these crimes cannot hide behind the technology they misuse.

Finally, I want to emphasize that HB 602 is about more than just changing the law; it's about giving victims a voice. As [Erika Thomas told us, she felt empowered by her decision to testify, even though she couldn't press charges.](#) She chose to speak out not just for herself but for other women who might be suffering in silence.

HB 602 is a critical step forward in ensuring that victims of non-consensual recordings are given the protections and opportunities for justice they deserve.

---

Update: On Monday, the Tennessee House unanimously passed the Voyeurism Victims Act. The bill now goes to Gov. Bill Lee's desk for signature.

###

*State Rep. Bob Freeman, D-Nashville, represents House District 56 in the Tennessee General Assembly. Bob Freeman is also the President of Freeman Webb Company in Nashville, Tenn., a full-service real estate investment and management firm that specializes in the acquisition, management and rehabilitation of multi-family residential and commercial properties.*