



Primary-Source Interview: Senator Lisa Boscola

Senate Bill 1083 · Senate Bill 1213 · Act 124 of 2024 — Deepfake & Synthetic Media Policy

INTERVIEWEE	Sen. Lisa Boscola, Pennsylvania State Senator — Prime sponsor, SB 1083; co-sponsor, SB 1213 (Act 124 of 2024)
INTERVIEWER	Anosh Matti, Matti Deepfake Advisory LLC
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About this interview

This interview was conducted as part of a case study examining legislative gaps in Pennsylvania's protections against the abuse of deepfake technology, particularly its impact on minors. Senator Boscola was the prime sponsor of Senate Bill 1083, whose provisions were later incorporated into Senate Bill 1213 and enacted as Act 124 of 2024. Her responses are reproduced below; light edits have been made for clarity in accordance with Section 3 of the Release, and no statement has been altered in substance.

Interview

1. What prompted your interest in legislation involving deepfake technology?

- Like most people, I had heard about the growth of AI in our everyday lives and its potential to make a lot of things in life more convenient and efficient. I started reading stories about deepfakes circulating on high school campuses. There was one in New Jersey, one in Lancaster. It seemed to be happening more and more and law enforcement all said the same thing: “there is nothing we can do. We need to update our laws.”
- Pennsylvania has a history of being the last to do anything. I wanted to change that when it came to deepfakes. High school is hard enough with social media. Now you add the ability to embarrass someone forever by posting a fake image — something needed to be done.

2. Could you briefly share what motivated you to sponsor Senate Bill 1083?

- Many of the stories follow the same pattern. One student takes an image of another student, often from Instagram or Snapchat, and uses AI to manipulate the image and produce deepfake content.
- The content frequently involves these students, often underage girls, in sexually explicit situations. Worse still is when you have adults creating the same content and sharing it in the dark corners of the internet, sometimes with images of even younger children. It's vile.
- So, I decided to introduce legislation to do something about it. That's why I introduced SB 1083 last year. That bill would have updated our child sex abuse laws to include images and videos made using AI technology and ensure these criminals get the punishment they deserve.
- Ultimately, that bill did not advance out of committee. Instead, I partnered with Senator Tracy Pennycuik and former Senator Jimmy Dillon on SB 1213 — a broader bill tackling sexually explicit deepfakes of both non-consenting adults and children. The provisions of my bill were incorporated into the new joint legislation.
- That bill passed both the House and Senate unanimously and was signed into law by Governor Shapiro as Act 124 of 2024.



3. What gaps in current Pennsylvania law do you think these bills are best positioned to fill?

- The big thing I kept hearing from law enforcement was that the lack of a specific reference to deepfakes and AI content in our child sex abuse statute was effectively allowing perverts to get away with making child pornography. The law only spoke to actual sexual acts, not AI depictions.
- Their hands were tied because the law was silent on deepfakes. This bill empowered law enforcement to go after these sickos. We have already seen individuals this year charged under the new law.

4. What challenges or opposition, if any, have you encountered in advocating for this legislation?

- There was no opposition on the bill in either form.

5. Are you working with any advocacy groups, tech experts, or law enforcement agencies on this issue?

- I worked with the Pennsylvania State Police, the Attorney General, and the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association on the bill. Their input was invaluable in getting the language right so deepfake content creators could be charged and held accountable.
- I will look for the opportunity to work with individuals to make sure we stay on top of technology. Bad guys will always be a step ahead. We need to keep pace, so if someone reaches out to my office about a gap in the law that lets things like this happen, I will work to make the needed changes.

6. How do you envision this legislation evolving as AI and deepfake technologies become more sophisticated?

- We accounted for AI's rapid innovation in crafting the language — our goal was to make it as future-proof as possible. Language accounting for both AI and generative AI was included.
- That being said, I think my colleagues are really much more aware today of the need to be on top of AI issues and would be responsive should any shortcomings in the law become apparent. Everyone agrees we need to stay on top of this.

7. What role should the state government play in regulating emerging technologies like AI compared to the federal government?

- This technology is borderless, so a top-down, nationwide approach is always going to work better. It is hard enough to get things done in Harrisburg; it is only worse in Washington.
- When it comes to basic public safety and consumer protection concerns, if the feds don't step up, the states have an obligation to do so. What else are we here for if not to protect our constituents?

8. What kind of public awareness or educational initiatives do you think should accompany this legislation?

- We've had great success in working with our district attorneys in getting the word out that PA will no longer turn a blind eye to deepfakes of minors. If you make them, we're coming for you.
- As I said, some district attorneys are already prosecuting criminals under the new law. Lehigh County just charged a man for making deepfake child pornography a couple of months ago. The new law is working.



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9. How do you balance the need to protect vulnerable populations with the desire to promote innovation and technological growth in Pennsylvania?

- With bills like this one, AI has amazing potential for PA, but its potential harms are becoming clearer.
- I believe it comes down to a basic bargain — we can foster innovation and growth in AI in PA, but not at the expense of public safety or the public good.

10. What sort of quantitative data would you use to evaluate the effectiveness of this legislation after implementation?

- I'll be curious to see how many individuals are charged and convicted under it. I think that will be the best metric of its effectiveness.

11. Is there anyone else you'd recommend I speak with who has contributed to or influenced these efforts?

- Speak with Senator Nick Miller and Senator Tracy Pennycuik. They are the chairs of the Senate Communications and Technology Committee and have really stepped up when it comes to AI's growth in PA.

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