



Volunteer & Career - United to Serve

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**The Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Senate Bill 70 Emergency Medical System Plan – Guidelines for Emergency Medical Services –
Law Enforcement Canines**

**Statement of Support by Ocean City Fire Department Public Information Officer
Ryan Whittington**

Dear Mr. Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Hello, I'm Ryan Whittington, a firefighter, medic, and Bomb Technician for the Ocean City Fire Department. I am in support of SB 70.

The Ocean City Fire Department works closely with our law enforcement partners, including their K-9 partners on emergency scenes. They are invaluable to not only the protection of their handlers but other first responders and members of our community. I've worked with K-9's that have various specialties- such as bomb and explosive and therapy/stress K-9's.

There are several ways that a K-9 can be injured. It can be from a fentanyl overdose, leaping over fences, walking over broken glass, being shot, or even a severe laceration resulting from being stabbed. These injuries are relatively rare, but they can be fairly significant, taking special knowledge to treat the injuries.

More and more, we are dealing with fentanyl overdoses and just as police officers have the potential to be exposed, so do their K-9's. This is one example of a skill that we could use to save the life of a K-9; however, EMS Clinicians are not trained or permitted to perform this essential lifesaving skill. Time is of the essence, so if our EMTs and Paramedics can help stabilize the K-9 in the field before they get to veterinary care, we can save the K-9's life.

Today, I want you to know that our department recognizes the value and need for our Clinicians to understand how to treat these animals as they are vital to police activity and a significant investment from our community.

The Ocean City Fire Department is willing to work closely with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services (MIEMSS), our local law enforcement partners, and K-9 veterinarians to establish protocols to be used across the state to help save a K-9 when the need arises.

We hope that you vote in favor of this bill!

Ocean City Fire Department

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http://oceancitymd.gov/Fire_Department/