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To: Members of The Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Doyle Niemann, Chair, Legislative Committee, Criminal Law and Practice Section

Date: February 4, 2022

Subject: **SB298 – Threat Against Public Health Official or Hospital Staff Member**

Position: **Support**

The Legislative Committee of the Criminal Law & Practice Section of the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) **Supports SB298 – Threat Against Public Health Official or Hospital Staff Member.**

This bill addresses a disturbing increase in threats public health officials or hospital staff members. These threaten to serious undercut public health efforts and increase the stress and burden on healthcare nurses and providers.

The bill makes it an offense to knowingly and willfully make a threat against a public health official or a staff member involved with patient care in a hospital with the intent to interfere with, intimidate or impede the work of that person.

The requirement that the threat must be made with the intent to interfere with, intimate or impede the lawful work of individuals ensures that the bill does not infringe on the right of individuals to express their opinions about decisions or the functioning of the public health and health care systems.

For the reasons stated, we **Support SB298 – Threat Against Public Health Official or Hospital Staff Member.**

If you have questions about the position of the Criminal Law and Practice Section’s Legislative Committee, please feel free to address them to me at 240-606-1298 or at doyleniemann@verizon.net.