

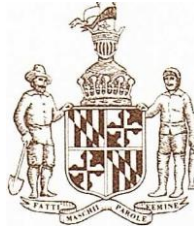
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Legislative District 12A
Howard County

Health and Government
Operations Committee

Subcommittees
Government Operations and
Health Facilities

Public Health and Minority
Health Disparities



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 23, 2023

SUPPORT

HB0744

CRIMINAL LAW – PUBLIC SAFETY – INTERFERENCE WITH A PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT - PENALTIES

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and Members of the Committee,

HB744 addresses the issue of disrupting and dismantling a Public Safety Answering Point/PSAP (9-1-1 Call Center). Strengthening statutes around this dangerous, costly, and increasingly popular activity was a recommendation of the Next Generation 9-1-1 Commission, and similar legislation has been introduced in 2020, 2021, and 2022. Following the 2022 Session, a workgroup was formed to focus on the most judicious way to define and deter targeted disruption of emergency response services and penalize those who attack them. **HB744** is one of two bills arising from their work.

Incidents in which individual or groups of individuals attempted to, or successfully, interfere with or disrupt with government systems and networks, including 9-1-1 call centers are on the rise. When PSAPs are interrupted, the overall safety of our residents is put at risk, and the possibility that people will not be able to access life-saving services when needed becomes real. Two methods bad actors use to disrupt emergency services are by

- Telephone Denial of Service (TDoS), wherein a large volume of malicious calls is made to public service response systems with the aim of overwhelming the system, and
- Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) whereby a large volume of malicious electronic traffic is generated and directed to overwhelm a site and disrupt its service.

A third disruption method, Swatting, the deliberate and malicious act of anonymously reporting a false crime or emergency to provoke a police response at the location of the targeted victim is addressed in HB745.

The number of cyberattacks, including Telephone Denial of Service (TDoS) and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS), that cause damage has increased in recent years. In the third quarter of 2021, there was an average of over 1,000 DDoS attacks per day, nationally.

HB744 enhances, when the target is a PSAP, penalties for intentional, willful, and unauthorized accessing or attempt to access, cause or exceeding authorized access to and for copying, attempting to copy, possessing, or attempting to possess the contents of all or part of a computer, computer network, computer control language, computer software, computer system, computer service, or computer database. When such efforts are directed with the intent of disrupting the functioning of a PSAP, a violator would be guilty of a felony, punishable by imprisonment for up to 5 years and/or a maximum fine of \$25,000. If the act results in the disruption of the functioning of a PSAP would be guilty of a felony, punishable by imprisonment for up to 10 years and/or a maximum fine of \$50,000.

To better ensure the proper and round-the-clock operating of our emergency reporting and response systems and the safety of our residents, I ask for a favorable report on **HB744**.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terri Hill".