



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE**

April 2, 2024

Senate Bill 1158: Crime of Violence - Educational Facilities, Medical Facilities, and Places of Worship - Penalty
(Sacred Places Safety Act)
Written Testimony Only

POSITION: FAVORABLE

On behalf of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 1158.

HFAM represents skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction of the state. HFAM is affiliated with the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), which is the largest association in the United States representing long-term and post-acute care providers.

Senate Bill 1158 would prohibit a person from committing a crime of violence while the person is in an educational facility, a medical facility, or a place of worship.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, healthcare workers in all settings have faced increased encounters with threats and harassment as they continue to provide quality care. Hostility and aggression towards healthcare professionals has grown over issues such as visitor restrictions and related COVID-19 policies, mask requirements, vaccination, and general misinformation.

Especially considering staffing shortages we already face in healthcare, it is critical that we give our healthcare heroes the support they need so they feel safe while doing their jobs to care for our family, friends, and neighbors.

It is also important that we protect and support our community members who work in and spend time in schools and places of worship. Along with healthcare facilities, these locations are integral for all members of the community to gather, grow, heal, and learn. This legislation will be a step in helping ensure these locations remain safe.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on Senate Bill 1158.

Submitted by:

Joseph DeMattos, Jr.
President and CEO
(410) 290-5132