



TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair
Members, House Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Tiffany T. Alston

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
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RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 547 – *Crime of Violence – Educational Facilities, Medical Facilities, and Places of Worship – Penalty (Sacred Places Safety Act)*

The Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (MDACEP), which represents the interests of emergency physicians and their patients throughout the State of Maryland, **supports** House Bill 547.

Workplace violence is a preventable and significant public health problem. Optimal patient care can be achieved only when patients, health care workers, and all other persons in the emergency department (ED) are protected against violent acts occurring within the department. In 2022, national ACEP conducted a poll of emergency physicians showing that violence in the ED is on the rise and is increasing rates of healthcare worker burnout and harming patient care. Specifically,

- Eighty-five percent of emergency physicians believe the rate of violence experienced in EDs has increased over the past five years, with 45% indicating it has greatly increased.
- Two-thirds of emergency physicians report being assaulted in the past year alone, while more than one-third of respondents say they have been assaulted more than once.
- One-third of emergency physicians who were assaulted resulted in an injury, an increase of 6% since 2018.
- The number of emergency physicians who missed part of or their entire shift has increased by 50% since 2018.
- According to emergency physicians, the lack of punitive consequences has become a larger factor in the rise of violence since 2018.
- Nearly nine in ten emergency physicians agree violence in the ED harms patient care (89%), a 12-percent increase from 2018.
- Violence in EDs is exacerbating the already high rates of healthcare worker burnout and impacting their mental health.
- Emergency physicians and their care teams deserve a support system that prevents these incidents and protects them when they occur.

Pursuing criminal prosecution, when deemed appropriate, against those individuals who threaten and commit violent acts against health care workers is necessary to protect the integrity of the health care system and ensure that individuals will continue to work in these environments. We respectfully request a favorable vote on House Bill 547.