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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB36: 9-8-8 Use of 9-1-1 Funds

House Health and Government Operations Committee
Tuesday, March 18, 2025 1:00 PM

There is a mental health crisis in America. The advent of the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in 2022 was a tremendous step forward in providing people with the support they need. The integration of 9-1-1 and 9-8-8 is critical to improve the delivery of services to the public.

[“Carl Henn’s Law”](#)-- named in memory of my friend and Rockville activist who died when 9-1-1 failed-- was enacted in 2019 to ensure that 9-1-1 Trust Fund dollars are used *exclusively* for 9-1-1 services. This limitation impedes our ability to connect 9-8-8 and 9-1-1.

[SB36](#) would allow a very modest amount of money from the 9-1-1 Trust Fund to be spent on 9-8-8 interconnectivity.

This bill was requested by the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), in consultation with the Maryland 9-1-1 Board Chair and Maryland Association of Counties Emergency Communications Committee. It would allow First Responders to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency operations while providing support for those in crisis.

Sen. Malcolm Augustine, the Senate’s go-to on 9-8-8, is a co-sponsor of this bill.

This bill and its cross-file have each passed their chamber of origin unanimously.

I urge a favorable report on SB36.