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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB81: Protecting 9-1-1 Centers from Cyberattacks

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
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Maryland is among a shrinking number of states that have not yet enacted legislation protecting critical infrastructure from cyberattacks.

This threat is not hypothetical-- in July of 2024, a flawed security update from CrowdStrike caused what is considered to be the [largest IT outage in history](#). It took down hospitals, airports, personal computers, transit systems, and 9-1-1 centers. While this blackout was not caused by an attack, the next one could be.

Cybersecurity companies have blocked billions of attempts to disrupt websites of public safety and other key infrastructure, but they won't always be successful.

We rely on the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act (CFAA), a federal law passed in 1986. Since then, government has been irresponsibly slow to adapt to the digital age.

SB81 as drafted would explicitly make cyberattacks illegal in Maryland and criminalize any act that intends to or actually interrupts or impairs the functioning of 9-1-1 centers. Thirty-one states already have laws penalizing these crimes.

Penalties proposed by this legislation:

- For an **attempted** cyberattack, imprisonment not exceeding five years and/or a fine of up to \$25,000; and
- For a **successful** cyberattack, imprisonment not exceeding ten years and/or a fine of up to \$50,000.

Similar versions of this bill passed unanimously in the Senate in 2022 and the House in 2023 and 2024.

I urge a favorable report on SB81 to protect the backbone of our public safety system.