

# SENATE BILL 480

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4lr4582  
CF 4lr4583

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By: **The President (By Request – Administration) and Senators Bailey, Beidle, Brooks, Charles, Corderman, Elfreth, Gile, Hettleman, Lam, McKay, Rosapepe, Salling, Waldstreicher, M. Washington, West, and Zucker**

Introduced and read first time: January 22, 2024

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Protecting Election Officials Act of 2024**

3 FOR the purpose of prohibiting a person from knowingly and willfully making a threat to  
4 harm an election official or an immediate family member of an election official  
5 because of the election official's role in administering the election process; and  
6 generally relating to prohibiting threats against election officials and their  
7 immediate family members.

8 BY adding to

9 Article – Election Law

10 Section 16–904

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article – Election Law**

16 **16–904.**

17 **(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**  
18 **INDICATED.**

19 **(2) “ELECTION OFFICIAL” MEANS:**

20 **(I) THE STATE ADMINISTRATOR;**

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



- 1 (II) A MEMBER OF THE STATE BOARD;
- 2 (III) AN EMPLOYEE OF THE STATE BOARD;
- 3 (IV) A COUNTY ELECTION DIRECTOR APPOINTED UNDER § 2-202  
4 OF THIS ARTICLE;
- 5 (V) A MEMBER OF A LOCAL BOARD;
- 6 (VI) AN EMPLOYEE OF A LOCAL BOARD; OR
- 7 (VII) AN ELECTION JUDGE.
- 8 (3) "ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN §  
9 3-805 OF THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE.
- 10 (4) "HARM" INCLUDES:
- 11 (I) SERIOUS INJURY; AND
- 12 (II) SERIOUS EMOTIONAL DISTRESS.
- 13 (5) "IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER" INCLUDES:
- 14 (I) A PARENT;
- 15 (II) A SPOUSE; AND
- 16 (III) A CHILD.
- 17 (6) "THREAT" INCLUDES:
- 18 (I) AN ORAL THREAT;
- 19 (II) A THREAT MADE BY ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION; AND
- 20 (III) A THREAT IN ANY WRITTEN FORM, WHETHER OR NOT THE  
21 WRITING IS SIGNED, OR IF THE WRITING IS SIGNED, WHETHER OR NOT IT IS SIGNED  
22 WITH A FICTITIOUS NAME OR ANY OTHER MARK.
- 23 (B) A PERSON MAY NOT KNOWINGLY AND WILLFULLY MAKE A THREAT TO  
24 HARM AN ELECTION OFFICIAL OR AN IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER OF AN ELECTION

1 OFFICIAL BECAUSE OF THE ELECTION OFFICIAL'S ROLE IN ADMINISTERING THE  
2 ELECTION PROCESS.

3 (C) A PERSON MAY NOT KNOWINGLY SEND, DELIVER, PART WITH, OR MAKE  
4 FOR THE PURPOSE OF SENDING OR DELIVERING A THREAT PROHIBITED UNDER  
5 SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION.

6 (D) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR  
7 AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 3 YEARS OR A  
8 FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$2,500 OR BOTH.

9 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
10 1, 2024.