

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 484 (St. Mary's County Delegation)
Environment and Transportation

St. Mary's County - Charitable or Fundraising Campaign Fraud - Police
Dispatcher

This bill alters the definition of “public safety officer” applicable to prohibitions against charitable or fundraising campaign fraud to include a police dispatcher who works at a public safety answering point in St. Mary’s County.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The applicability of existing criminal penalties to the bill does not have a material impact on State finances or operations.

Local Effect: The applicability of existing criminal penalties to the bill does not have a material impact on local finances or operations.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A person may not encourage, solicit, or receive contributions of money or anything of value for, or offer any thing for sale in, a charitable or other fundraising campaign by representing to the public that the charitable or other fundraising campaign is approved by:

- a police or fire department in the State without the prior written consent of the chief administrative officer of the police or fire department or from the chief administrative officer’s designee; or

- a public safety officer or member of the family of a public safety officer without the prior written consent of the public safety officer or a family member of the public safety officer.

A violator is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction subject to maximum penalties of 60 days imprisonment and/or a \$1,000 fine.

These provisions do not prohibit, limit, or interfere with the right of an off-duty public safety officer who is not in uniform from participating in a charitable or other fundraising campaign.

“Public safety officer” means a police officer, a paid or volunteer firefighter, an emergency medical technician, a rescue squad member, the State Fire Marshal, or a sworn officer of the State Fire Marshal.

“Public safety answering point” means a communications facility that is operated on a 24-hour basis, first receives 9-1-1 calls in a 9-1-1 service area, and as appropriate, dispatches public safety services directly, or transfers 9-1-1 calls to appropriate public safety agencies.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): St. Mary’s County; Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Office of the Public Defender; Maryland State’s Attorneys’ Association; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of Legislative Services

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mm/lgc

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