Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 676 (Senator A. Washington)
Judicial Proceedings

Criminal Law - Threat of Mass Violence - Penalty

This bill reclassifies the crime of making a threat of mass violence from a misdemeanor to a felony. The bill retains the existing penalties for this offense.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential minimal decrease in general fund revenues from fines imposed in District Court misdemeanor threat of mass violence cases that shift to the circuit courts due to the bill's felony designation. Expenditures are not materially affected.

Local Effect: Potential minimal increase in local revenues from fines imposed in circuit court cases. Expenditures are not materially affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A person may not knowingly threaten to commit or threaten to cause to be committed a "crime of violence," as defined in § 14-101 of the Criminal Law Article, that would place five or more people at substantial risk of death or serious physical injury if the threat were carried out. This prohibition applies to oral threats, written threats, or electronic threats, as specified. Violators are guilty of a *misdemeanor* punishable by imprisonment for up to 10 years and/or a $10,000 maximum fine. If appropriate, a court must also order a person convicted of this offense to reimburse governmental entities or persons for expenses and losses incurred to respond to the threat, as specified. A violator may be indicted, prosecuted, tried, and convicted in any county where the threat was made, the threat was received, or the consequences of the threat occurred.

Additional Comments: The Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy advises that it received information on four individuals sentenced to five counts of threatening mass violence under § 3-1001 of the Criminal Law Article in the State's circuit courts during fiscal 2025. District Court data for this offense is not readily available.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

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