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Testimony in Support of

SB 1036
Maryland Emergency Management Agency – Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office – Establishment

Primary Sponsor: Senator Katie Fry Hester

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
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Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chairwoman Kagan, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 1036.

My name is James Hatch, I am the Program Manager of Computer Science and Cybersecurity at Frederick Community College. I am also a Professor of Cybersecurity, Information Systems, and Technology at both the Undergraduate and Graduate levels. I hold an MBA, MSIT, MS in Digital Forensics. In my teaching and presentations on the topic of Cybersecurity, I combine the market forces of business with the technical skills bound in Cybersecurity and the sociological interactions of various populations.

In my experience I place people primarily into two camps; those aware of cybersecurity and those who believe cybersecurity is another person's job to take care of. Because of this dichotomy, we must have organizations capable providing generally accepted risk assessments, aggregation of information from disparate sources into cogent action items, a means of reliable dissemination, and readiness if a disaster occurs. In any organization, we must have incident response, disaster recovery, and continuity of operations. For all of these it is best if it comes from a single, unifying office within a region to improve statewide readiness.

The combination of technical assistance and readiness can be provided, statewide by MEMA, as baseline operational readiness reports and guides, regional guides, focused assessments, statewide and regional exercises, and specialized information when appropriate. Through its many relationships, MEMA can facilitate these activities and be the voice for Cybersecurity best practices within the State of Maryland.

As an example of the difference between siloed response and guided response, if my program at school were to be brought offline due to an incident, I can be operational within 15 minutes by activating plans that have been developed through years of working with those who have already been through disasters and through empirical knowledge dealing with incidents. Having witnessed siloed solutions to incident response, it can take weeks to become operational again. Government does not have that luxury. We stand on the shoulders of giants.

Historically, organizations that operate within a silo will act based on what the organization knows, and only through coordination in communications and information gathering can we know more than our direct experiences. Less than ideal results will occur in greater numbers unless a unifying organization can coordinate exercises. MEMA already has the relationships necessary to fulfill that unifying objective. Maryland needs a cybersecurity coordination and operations office to remove the noise and delay in

implementations at various levels. Furthermore, the office discussed in this bill makes economic sense as it becomes the focal point of information gathering and dissemination across the state instead of many field offices individually doing the due diligence necessary to implement plans.

The support of the many is done through the actions of the few.

While there are tens of millions of cybersecurity threats around the world at any given hour of the day, a small team of skilled individuals can support the coordination of multitudes of offices and agencies through the use of defined policy and procedure specific to their mandated goals and the establishment of the Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office within MEMA.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

James Hatch