



# **SANDY SPRING VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC.**

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**Chairman Barve**

**Vice Chairman Stein**

## **SUPPORT FOR HB 823 – STATE FIRE MARSHAL – SPRINKLER SYSTEMS ENFORCEMENT**

**Chairman Barve, Vice Chairman Stein, and members of the  
Environment and Transportation Committee.**

**My name is Johnie Roth and I am here today in SUPPORT of HB 823  
from the officers and members of the Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire  
Department, located in Montgomery County, Maryland.**

**As a proud Volunteer Firefighter for the last 53 years and serving as  
the Past Chief, I can tell you, first hand, that fires have changed dramatically  
over the years. Today, homes are made with lightweight construction  
materials and the materials inside the homes are made of toxic flammable  
materials that burn faster and hotter than ever before. Fires that we fight  
today are extremely challenging and even more dangerous to our firefighters  
and rescuers as increasing numbers of firefighter cancers are being  
diagnosed.**

**The addition of the 10-year sealed smoke alarm law was the first step  
for Maryland to get our citizens out of their homes as soon as possible in the  
event of a fire. The next major step was to pass the Maryland Law requiring  
the installation of sprinkler systems in "New Single Family Homes". This was  
a no-brainer and was crucial to protecting Marylanders across this great  
state from loss of life and was basically placing a firefighter in the home 24**

**hours a day, 365 days a year. It is an obligation of each and every fire and rescue service member to do everything within our power to promote Fire safety and to Save Lives and Protect Property.**

**This is what has brought us to today's hearing. The Maryland Law requiring the installation of Residential Sprinkler Systems in New Single Family Homes is being violated today and we need the Maryland State Fire Marshal and his Deputies to enforce the law. Short and simple, this is the issue before you today.**

**Opponents to the Residential Sprinklers have used every argument imaginable for the last 3 years from the cost, to special equipment needed, to prospective buyers and builders fleeing Maryland to other states, and that the requirements are killing their local economy. My answer to them is, what price do you put on a life? Why wouldn't you want to give a family every opportunity to escape a fire in their home? It's a proven fact that Residential Sprinklers, in conjunction with Smoke Alarms "Saves Lives".**

**We've had many required changes over the years in the State of Maryland for the good of everyone in this state, but there are few groups in this state that just don't want to be told by their state legislators that you must do this or that. There are those that don't like or abide the speed limits on our highways, those that won't wear seatbelts in cars or wear helmets when riding motorcycles, and now those that don't want to be told to install Residential Sprinklers.**

**In closing, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, of the many bills that you will hear this session, this is one of the most important bills regarding the Public Safety of all Marylanders. I thank you for your hearing of this bill and hope and pray that you will do the right thing by giving the enforcement powers to the Maryland State Fire Marshal and his deputies and make Maryland a safe state for all our future residents.**

**We look forward to a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB 823 from the Environmental and Transportation Committee and would be glad to answer any questions that you may have.**

**Thank You  
Johnie F. Roth, Jr.  
President  
Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department**