

Caroom_FWA_SB1008

Uploaded by: Caroom, Phil

Position: FAV

FWA SB 1008 - Ban-the-Box in public safety

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM
Working toward necessary incarceration and build strong self-communities



TO: Chair Will Smith and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Phil Caroom, MAJR Executive Committee

DATE: March 12, 2020

Md. Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR-www.ma4jr.org) strongly supports SB 1008 — with an amendment (as done in the House counterpart bill - HB 586) to delete review panels — as an important measure to eliminate collateral consequences and to offer better employment opportunities to responsible returning citizens.

It is commonly recognized that, due to the U.S. “war on crime,” today [approximately 1 in 3 Americans has a record of arrest or incarceration](#) that, if demanded on an employment application, might prevent the opportunity for more meaningful consideration of the applicant. As a result, 35 U.S. states so far have “banned-the-box” to some extent, including Maryland and many “red” states. *Id.*

Studies suggest that the likelihood of being called for a job interview drop by 70% when the applicant has to admit to a criminal record in the application; but, when an interview is given and the record is disclosed then, one study suggests a 30% higher likelihood of employment. [See U.S. News and World Report - article 9/10/19](#). While more study may be needed to know the impact with precision, this evidence is strong enough to know that disclosure of a criminal record later in the job application process gives applicants a significantly better change.

As a public policy matter, giving returning citizens a full opportunity to explain their employment qualifications and their prior record makes good sense because employment has been shown to reduce the odds of recidivism:

- *“The probability of re-conviction for someone who is employed within two months of release and earning \$10 or more per hour is only 8 percent, one-third of the probability of an unemployed ex-offender.” Greater Baltimore Committee - “Opening Doors to Second Chances” (2016) report, citing 3-state longitudinal study by Urban Inst.*

- *“Statewide rates of recidivism [generally] range from about 31 to 70 percent, while the rates for those placed in jobs shortly after their release ranged from 3.3 to eight percent.” -Immediate Access to Employment Reduces Recidivism (2015).*

Would the employment situation of “fire department, rescue squad or ambulance service” present a public safety risk if someone with a criminal history gained employment there? MAJR suggests that, given the communal nature of this employment, the frequent involvement of law enforcement, and high degree of accountability, the risk would be minimal and any “bad apples” would be quickly discovered.

For all these reasons, Md. Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) urges a favorable report on SB 1008 with the aforementioned amendment.

PLEASE NOTE: Phil Caroom offers this testimony for Md. Alliance for Justice Reform and not for the Md. Judiciary.

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Uploaded by: Senator Carter, Senator Carter

Position: FAV



**Testimony for the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 12, 2020**

**SB 1008 Public Safety – Criminal History Records Check – Fire
Departments, Rescue Squads, and Ambulance Services**

BRIELLE MORTON
PUBLIC POLICY INTERN

FAVORABLE

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The ACLU of Maryland supports SB 1008, which would prohibit employers in Fire Departments, Rescue Squads, and Ambulance services from conducting criminal history records checks on job candidates before the first in-person interview. It also requires the formation of a peer review committee to make recommendations regarding employment post-background check.

Studies show that employment opportunities can reduce recidivism rates.^{1,2} Yet, for far too many Marylanders, a criminal record—regardless of how minor the offense, such as minor possession of marijuana, which this body decriminalized in 2014. Moreover, these collateral consequences are particularly stark for communities of color.

Criminal records exclude individuals from employment.

The existence of a misdemeanor criminal record can and does create a barrier to employment for many Marylanders. More than 80% of U.S. employers perform criminal background checks on prospective employees.³

Misdemeanor convictions disparately disadvantage individuals, families, and communities of color

¹ See for example Nally, Lockwood, Taiping, and Knutson, The Post-Release Employment and Recidivism Among Different Types of Offenders With A Different Level of Education: A 5-Year Follow-Up Study in Indiana (noting that recidivist offenders were likely to be unemployed or under-educated)

² Decker, S. H., Spohn, C., & Ortiz, N. R. (2014). Criminal Stigma, Race, Gender, and Employment: An Expanded Assessment of the Consequences of Imprisonment for Employment. *National Institute of Justice*. Retrieved from http://thecrimereport.s3.amazonaws.com/2/fb/e/2362/criminal_stigma_race_crime_and_unemployment.pdf

³ Burke, M.E., 2004 Reference and Background Checking Survey Report: A Study by the Society for Human Resource Management, Alexandria, Va.: Society for Human Resource Management, 2006.



AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
FOUNDATION

Maryland

The over-criminalization of communities of color—largely due to the ‘war on drugs’—has produced the startling result that one in three Black men born today can expect to go to prison in their lifetime, compared with one in six Latino men, and one in seventeen White men.⁴ In addition to facing higher imprisonment rates, racial minorities, once arrested, are more likely to be convicted, and once convicted, are more likely to face longer sentences than their White counterparts.⁵

With higher conviction rates, persons of color unnecessarily bear the brunt of collateral consequences stemming from misdemeanor convictions. Exclusion from the job market, stable housing, and countless other crucial services perpetuate the cycle of imprisonment plaguing communities of color.

Prohibiting pre-interview checks allows candidates to be evaluated for their skills first and not for a record.

Public safety is not threatened as the information is still known. The review board allows candidates an opportunity to explain their records, such as listed charges that should have been expunged.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 1008.

⁴ Saki Knafo, 1 In 3 Black Males Will Go To Prison In Their Lifetime, Report Warns (HUFFINGTON POST, Oct. 4, 2013).

⁵ Id.

Caroom_FAV_SB1008

Uploaded by: Senator Carter, Senator Carter

Position: FAV

FWA HB 586 - Ban-the-Box in public safety

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM
Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



TO: Chair Luke Clippinger and House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Phil Caroom, MAJR Executive Committee

DATE: February 11, 2020

Md. Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR-www.ma4jr.org) strongly supports HB 586, with its sponsor's amendment to delete review panels, as an important measure to eliminate collateral consequences and to offer better employment opportunities to responsible returning citizens.

It is commonly recognized that, due to the U.S. "war on crime," today [approximately 1 in 3 Americans has a record of arrest or incarceration](#) that, if demanded on an employment application, might prevent the opportunity for more meaningful consideration of the applicant. As a result, 35 U.S. states so far have "banned-the-box" to some extent, including Maryland and many "red" states. Id.

Studies suggest that the likelihood of being called for a job interview drop by 70% when the applicant has to admit to a criminal record in the application; but, when an interview is given and the record is disclosed then, one study suggests a 30% higher likelihood of employment. [See U.S. News and World Report - article 9/10/19](#). While more study may be needed to know the impact with precision, this evidence is strong enough to know that disclosure of a criminal record later in the job application process gives applicants a significantly better chance.

As a public policy matter, giving returning citizens a full opportunity to explain their employment qualifications and their prior record makes good sense because employment has been shown to reduce the odds of recidivism:

- *"The probability of re-conviction for someone who is employed within two months of release and earning \$10 or more per hour is only 8 percent, one-third of the probability of an unemployed ex-offender."* Greater Baltimore Committee - *"Opening Doors to Second Chances"* (2016) report, citing 3-state longitudinal study by Urban Inst.
- *"Statewide rates of recidivism [generally] range from about 31 to 70 percent, while the rates for those placed in jobs shortly after their release ranged from 3.3 to eight percent."* - *Immediate Access to Employment Reduces Recidivism* (2015).

Would the employment situation of "fire department, rescue squad or ambulance service" present a public safety risk if someone with a criminal history gained employment there? MAJR suggests that, given the communal nature of this employment, the frequent involvement of law enforcement, and high degree of accountability, the risk would be minimal and any "bad apples" would be quickly discovered.

For all these reasons, Md. Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) urges a favorable report on HB 586 as amended.

PLEASE NOTE: Phil Caroom offers this testimony for Md. Alliance for Justice Reform and not for the Md. Judiciary.

Del. Bartlett_FAV_SB1008

Uploaded by: Senator Carter, Senator Carter

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

In support of HB586 – Public Safety – Criminal History Records Check – Fire Departments, Rescue Squads and Ambulance Services

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and fellow members of the Judiciary Committee, I am here today in support of HB586 – essentially a ban the box bill for fire and rescue. We just voted strongly over the pass two years to first ban the box for colleges and this year to ban the box for private companies of 15 or more employees.

You will see in the fiscal and policy note that a background check is approximately \$51. This bill proposes that the applicant is not required to have a criminal background check until after the interview. Now you will hear from the opponents of this bill that not all jurisdictions have the same protocol with respect to when a background check is done, or when an agency would inquire into the criminal history of an applicant. My research in preparation for this bill shows that some departments ask, some don't. Some require the applicant to agree to the background check at the initial application, some don't. Baltimore City and Montgomery County have policy that bans the box for fire and EMS, some departments don't have such a policy.

There is nothing that prohibits an agency from going on Maryland Judiciary Case Search to search an applicant or Googling them. These are quick easy mechanics that can save the agency the time and hassle of calling the applicant in for an interview and "wasting" the agency's time.

You may also hear that there was an incident in which arson was found in someone criminal history and they were not allowed to serve in the department and I believe the individual appealed the decision and lost. Guess what? That's the way the system should work.

You heard the compelling arguments on the floor of the house to override the Governor's veto of HB994 from 2019. You heard our colleague discuss his record

and how he later graduated top of his law school class, became an attorney is now serving in the General Assembly. Did you also know that we have a Maryland Congressman who also had pending criminal charges and with great resources and as a white male, he was able to defeat the charges?

I get it. We are a society that believes, you make your bed, you lie in it. I get that. But for how long? What if who you were is not who you are now? What if you never get to tell the story yourself as to who you have become?

California pulls inmates out of jail to put out wildfires, yet when they are released, they cannot get hired. Bridgeport, Connecticut has what they call a Second Chance program. 5 returning citizens have been hired under that program.

Bill Gates had a criminal record, what if he could never have found future employment? I leave you with a few more questions to ponder. What if a person's medical history was required at the time of the application? What if the question on the application instead of a conviction was "have you ever had unprotected sex?" Think of how many assumptions one can make based upon the answer to that question. "What were your test results in your last mammogram or last prostate exam?"

Personal questions deserve to be explained by the person. For these reasons, I request a favorable vote on HB586.

Bridgeport officials encouraged Chief Richard Thode to start the program based on his experience with a past criminal conviction.

It's not easy becoming a [firefighter](#). There are many hoops to jump through – certifications, written and physical abilities testing, interviews, background screenings. One problem with any part of the process, and the candidate is often out of the running. The [hiring process](#) tends to be unforgiving, even if a problem occurred long in the past.

Given the competitive nature of the process, and the fact that each hiring leaves qualified people behind, why would any fire department want to offer concessions for past legal troubles that show up on background screenings?

One reason is that in some cases, those with a checkered past may already be doing the job. In the state of California, 20% of all wildland firefighters are [inmates in state correctional programs](#). Some of these inmates have been fighting fires for years, sometimes on the most challenging and dangerous fires in the state. Yet when they complete their sentences and are

fully integrated back into the community, they are not eligible to even apply for the same job they had successfully done while incarcerated.

There have been efforts to advance legislation that would change the standards that automatically disqualify certain applicants because of criminal convictions. So far that legislation has failed, and no second chances are available to these potential candidates.

Bridgeport Offers Second Chances

One place where second chances are a reality is the city of [Bridgeport, Connecticut](#), the largest city in the state, with a fire department of 300 career members. Bridgeport currently has a city-wide program – [the Mayor’s Initiative for Reentry Affairs \(MIRA\)](#) – that allows applicants who would normally be eliminated due to past legal problems to get a second look during the application process.

Chief Richard Thode explained that the program started at the behest of elected officials and the mayor, who has a personal connection to the concept of second chances due to his own past criminal conviction.

The program involves a peer review committee selected for each hiring process by the chief and deputy chief of the department. Effort is made to make the committee as diverse as possible, and members sign a confidentiality agreement regarding the information they have access to during the process.

If an otherwise promising candidate is revealed to have a past legal problem that may be forgivable, that person is called to meet with the committee and explain their side of the story.

If hired, people coming in through this process are on probation for a period of time related to their past issues. So far, the department has hired five or six recruits under these conditions.

Thode told the story of one of the firefighters hired in this way. As a teenager, he was arrested on drug charges and spent 8 months in jail. But once he got out of jail, he changed his life. He got a job as a CDL truck driver, got married and had children. In his 30s, he came to the fire department looking for a second chance – and they gave him one. Entering the department in a recruit class of more than two dozen, few people knew that he had gone through a unique hiring experience. Thode added that he has proven to be an asset and valued member of the department.

Representative of Community Diversity

Even with this kind of positive outcome, there is the question of why — why bother making these special efforts for some candidates when there are already more than enough prospective firefighters without those issues?

A big reason why this program is important to the Bridgeport Fire Department is its commitment to including and representing the community it serves. Compared to the rest of the state, people

living in Bridgeport are significantly younger, less affluent and more racially and ethnically diverse. Although residency is not a requirement for employment with the city, the department wants to reach out to residents to become firefighters. In making this effort, Thode said, the department found that a zero-tolerance policy for past legal issues dramatically reduced the candidate pool.

Thode acknowledged that not all department members were supportive of the program at the beginning, but said it is a non-issue now: “The people we have hired through this program, it’s like they still have a debt to pay,” he said. “They’re motivated to prove that ‘I’m a second chance candidate and I’m going show you I’m not a mistake.’ Every person that we have hired under the program has been exemplary. They’re great employees.”

The Bridgeport Fire Department is committed to representing the full diversity of the community they serve — and this includes providing opportunities for some people who may benefit from getting a second chance.

About the Author

Linda Willing is a retired career fire officer and currently works with emergency services agencies and other organizations on issues of leadership development, decision making, and diversity management through her company, [RealWorld Training and Consulting](#). She is also an adjunct instructor and curriculum advisor with the National Fire Academy. Linda is the author of *On the Line: Women Firefighters Tell Their Stories*. She has a bachelor’s degree in American studies, a master’s degree in organization development and is a certified mediator. Linda is a member of the [FireRescue1/Fire Chief Editorial Advisory Board](#). To contact Linda, e-mail Linda.Willing@FireRescue1.com.

Haven_FAV_SB1008

Uploaded by: Senator Carter, Senator Carter

Position: FAV

Kimberly Haven

February 11, 2020

House Judiciary Committee

HOUSE BILL 586 - SUPPORT

A criminal record is a clear barrier to getting a job. For those who desire to serve the public - to provide help to our fellow citizens who need them, to rush into a burning building, or be the first on the scene and be able to render assistance, a past involvement with the criminal justice system, should not be used as a barrier to applying for these jobs. Let's face it, these are jobs that we need people to do....jobs that not many of us would aspire to, feel called to do, much less apply for.

This legislation is good policy. It builds on and expands the legislation passed by this body last year, that ensures that individuals who apply for a job, will not be asked on the application or prior to their first in-person interview. Individuals with criminal records are instructed on how to answer the question regarding their criminal history. They are told to answer honestly, and sometimes to even leave the question blank or state that they will explain in the interview. The problem is that they often do not even get the chance to have an interview. This is because they check the box on the job application saying they have a criminal record.

Their application is simply tossed aside - ignored or even thrown away. By checking this box, they are denied the opportunity to compete fairly for the job.

HB 586 is commonsense reform that creates the opportunity for an individual to explain their record and to state why they are the best candidate for the position.

This legislation does not deny employers access to criminal background information. Nor does it force employers to hire workers with criminal records. It simply defers criminal history until later in the process to give *all* applicants a fair chance to be judged, first and foremost, on their qualifications.

Everyone has the right to secure a steady job in order to support themselves and their families. Getting people back to work improves the safety of our communities, strengthens families and reduces dependence on government programs - goals we all share.

Past mistakes do not have to define the potential of an individual's future.

I strongly urge this committee to support HB 586.

Jill Carter_FAV_SB1008

Uploaded by: Senator Carter, Senator Carter

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of SB 1008 - Public Safety – Criminal History Records Check
– Fire Departments, Rescue Squads, and Ambulance Services
Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee
on March 12, 2020**

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I am here today to tell you about SB 1008 – essentially a “ban the box” bill for EMT’s, paramedics and firefighters. Over the past two years, this body has voted to “ban the box” on college applications and for companies with 15 or more employees. This bill proposes that someone who applies to do this vital and dangerous work not be subjected to a criminal background check until after the first interview.

Currently, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Charles County and Montgomery County have policies or practices that effectively do what this legislation envisages.

There is nothing in this bill that prohibits an agency from running an applicant’s name through Maryland Judiciary Case Search. Or checking them on Facebook or Google prior to the first interview. This legislation gives them the chance to explain; to tell their whole story.

California routinely pulls inmates out of prisons to put out wildfires, yet when they are released, they cannot get hired. Bridgeport, Connecticut has what they call a Second Chance program. Five returning citizens have been hired as first responders under that initiative and are doing well.

It is axiomatic by this point that employment reduces recidivism significantly. Similarly, we know that the racial nature of the war on drugs has disproportionately impacted people of color. We benefit from diversity in every aspect of public service. Why not here, as well?

Having had prior police contacts, or even a criminal record should not be necessarily a disqualifying condition for our first responders. It does not reflect on their physical fitness to do the job. It does not have any bearing on their ability to learn the important skills needed to protect property and save lives. It does not in any way diminish their willingness to run into a burning building while everyone else is running out. There are shortages of brave women and men willing to step up and risk everything for their fellow Marylanders. This bill gives returning citizens the chance to prove their mettle to a society that might otherwise have written them off.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 1008.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill P. Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill P. Carter

MACo_UNF_SB1008

Uploaded by: Jabin, Drew

Position: UNF



Senate Bill 1008

*Public Safety – Criminal History Records Check –
Fire Departments, Rescue Squads, and Ambulance Services*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: March 12, 2020

From: Drew Jabin

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 1008. This bill would implement a concerning limitation on fire departments, rescue squads, and ambulance services during the job application process. This piecemeal legislation places a burden on public safety services to implement peer review committees to consider potential hires, when personnel should be providing care and service to the community they serve.

SB 1008 prohibits a fire department, rescue squad, or an ambulance service from requiring an applicant to disclose their criminal record or criminal accusations before the first in-person interview. It also prohibits these employers from conducting criminal history record checks of the applicant. This troublesome bill also requires that each service shall establish a peer review committee to determine whether an applicant is fit for hire.

Public safety employees – routinely called upon to enter people’s property, and to engage with people at their most vulnerable – should be exempt from any type of “ban the box” legislation. Fire departments, rescue squads, and ambulance services are properly held to a higher standard by the public, and such legislation could undermine a community’s confidence in these first responders. Prior “ban the box” legislation already weighed this question, and wisely left these employees beyond its scope.

Another concern raised by the Peer Review Committee established in SB 1008 is confidentiality of personnel records and information. This burdensome, and potentially insecure, requirement would place inappropriate risk on members of the Committee and could also pose grave liability risks for the employer. The legislation does not detail how the Committee protocol would work and does not detail record-keeping procedures or policy.

SB 1008 unfairly burdens our public safety services by requiring them to implement unnecessary administrative hurdles while taking away the necessary background checks and employee vetting processes already set in place. MACo urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 1008.

Maryland state Firemen's association_UNF_SB1008

Uploaded by: Roth, Johnie

Position: UNF

MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel
www.msfa.org



Johnie F. Roth, Jr.

Legislative Chairman

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March 12, 2020

Chairman Smith

Vice Chairman Waldstretcher

OPPOSITION OF SB 1008 – PUBLIC SAFETY – CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECK – FIRE DEPARTMENTS, RESCUE SQUADS, AND AMBULANCE SERVICES

Good afternoon Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Waldstreichler and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee.

My name is Johnie Roth, Jr. and I chair the Legislative Committee of the Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA), and I am writing in OPPOSITION of SB 1008 – Public Safety – Criminal History Records Check – Fire Departments, Rescue Squads, and Ambulance Services.

The MSFA is a statewide organization representing over 25,000 volunteer fire, rescue, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics and 363 member companies.

Your fire and rescue services provided by both volunteer and career members in the State of Maryland are the best in the United States and are emulated all over the world. These men and women are dedicated to providing the best services to those that are having the worst day of their lives.

The leadership of the volunteer and career fire and rescue companies have an important obligation to the citizens of Maryland, whose homes we go into to provide fire or ems services, and to the members that have gone through a background check process and have trained to be excellent providers.

Therefore, it is not by accident that these men and women are selected by the current practice of filling out a written application, which includes a successful completion of a physical, and a criminal FBI background check through either the local jurisdiction, Sheriff's office, or State Fire Marshal's office.

All candidates go through an interview process either face to face or via telephone and are expected to pass a background check. Departments throughout the state have different processes depending upon their administrative staffing and financial capabilities. These processes have worked quite well over the years.

We understand that the sponsors on in the House and Senate don't want to eliminate background checks and wants applicant to not have to disclose any criminal history on an application prior to the interview, however, the wording of this bill is not clear on its intent and may be interpreted differently across the state if it is put in as currently written.

Since this bill was heard in the House Judiciary Committee the MSFA has been contacted by numerous fire and rescue departments in opposition of changing the current practice, and we feel that we must OPPOSE SB 1008 and would recommend an UNFAVORABLE REPORT.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and I'd be glad to answer any question that you may have.

**Johnie F. Roth, Jr.
MSFA Chairman
Legislative Committee**

MSFA_UNF_SB1008

Uploaded by: Tomanelli, Kate

Position: UNF

MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel
www.msfa.org



Kate Tomanelli

Executive Director
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March 12, 2020

OPPOSITION OF SB 1008 – PUBLIC SAFETY – CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECK – FIRE DEPARTMENTS, RESCUE SQUADS, AND AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, and the members of the Committee:

My name is Kate Tomanelli and I am the Executive Director of the Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA), and I am writing in OPPOSITION of Senate Bill 1008.

The MSFA is a statewide organization representing over 25,000 volunteer fire, rescue, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics and 363 member companies.

Although we understand the intention of this bill, at this time, the MSFA cannot support it due to the following reasons:

- 1. This particular bill does not show the recommended amendments that were discussed when it was read in the House, those that included removing the "in-person" context for interviews, and peer review committee references.**
- 2. It also does not fully explain what would constitute an "interview" and we feel that that alone would leave the basis of this bill wide open for interpretation across the 350+ departments across the State.**

3. In addition, it is currently normal practice for our volunteer departments to conduct background checks on all of its members. That being said, because our departments are made up of volunteers, processes for onboarding a new volunteer can differ significantly depending on availability and time, and sometimes there may not be an opportunity to have a full interview with an applicant prior to providing them with an application which may or may not require them to disclose any kind of background history.

Our volunteer fire departments and rescue squads rely on background checks of our applicants to ensure that we choose the most highly qualified applicants for the dangerous, sensitive job that we do. We know the value of having people in our departments that have not only the public's trust but the trust of their fellow volunteer so the opposition is not for the background checks themselves but the order in which this bill would require our departments to acquire that information. For these reasons, the MSFA OPPOSES SB 1008 and would recommend an UNFAVORABLE REPORT.

Respectfully,
Kate Tomanelli
Executive Director, MSFA

Wantz_Carroll County__UNF_SB1008

Uploaded by: Wantz, Steve

Position: UNF

**Board of County
Commissioners**

**Stephen A. Wantz
President**



Carroll County Government

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Good afternoon.

I'm Stephen Wantz, President of the Carroll County Board of Commissioners and a member of the Board of Directors of the Maryland Association of Counties. I am a retired professional firefighter as well as Past President of the Carroll County Volunteer Emergency Services Association and served as a delegate in the Maryland State Firemen's Association.

Me and many of my colleagues around the state find SB 1008 challenging. When a prospective individual begins the process of becoming a member, it is the responsibility of our fire departments to ensure that the individual is vetted in the most efficient way possible. Initial interaction typically consists of an application resulting in a next step background check to ensure additional time, resource and money is warranted. We are talking about fire stations that contain huge amounts of incredibly expensive equipment and ambulances that have medications, and related equipment that are valuable ensuring they are secured appropriately. It is also vitally important to know that any individual who becomes a member and trained, will be involved with patient care and will see people when they are most vulnerable, oftentimes, in private settings. The level of responsibility and reliability is off the charts and the first step of a background step ensures the right direction moving forward.

It is also important to remember many of our volunteer departments around the state conduct candidate vetting without the benefit of a Human Resources Department or properly trained human resource individuals which begs the question, what is an interview? As a result, we rely on background checks out of the gate. It is also fiscally irresponsible to not perform a background check right away. The deeper you get in the hiring process; the more fiscal needs are incurred.

We are rapidly regulating volunteer fire, emergency medical services and rescue right out of business. While I appreciate the importance of allowing individuals to be given a chance to rehabilitate and believe in due process, our paramilitary public safety responders should be held at a much higher standard.

Conducting an initial background is the commonsense thing. I ask for an unfavorable report.

Stephen A. Wantz, President
Carroll County Board of Commissioners

MFCA_UNF_SB1008

Uploaded by: Woods, Harve

Position: UNF



Maryland Fire Chiefs Association

Representing the Maryland Emergency Services Officers with Progression While Maintaining Tradition

Honorable William C. Smith, Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee,
Maryland Senate

March 12th, 2020

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 1008

Dear Mr. Chairman,

My name is Harve Woods and I am the Legislative Committee Chairman of the Maryland Fire Chief's Association (MFCA). The MFCA serves as the organization representing over 1,600 volunteer and career Chief Officers throughout Maryland. I am writing on behalf of the members of the MFCA who are in **Opposition** to Senate Bill 1008 – Public Safety, Criminal History Records Check – Fire Departments, Rescue Squads, and Ambulance Services.

Our **Opposition** to this Bill is based on the Fact that, across the State, there are places where the application process is out of the hands of the Fire Departments, etc. and placed with local government. The determination of if and when to initiate any portion of the application process is established by local law and not by the Agencies that are the subject of this bill.

Additionally, the "Peer Review Committee" albeit under different names, already exists in both the volunteer and local government agencies/departments that are the subject of this Bill. We thank the committee for their time and attention, and respectfully request that the Committee give an **Unfavorable** report on Senate Bill 1008.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harve Woods
Legislative Committee Chair,
Maryland Fire Chief's Association.