

# MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

*Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel*  
[www.msfa.org](http://www.msfa.org)



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**February 11, 2020**

**Chairman Clippinger**

**Madam Vice Chair Atterbeary**

## **OPPOSITION OF HB 586 – PUBLIC SAFETY – CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECK – FIRE DEPARTMENTS, RESCUE SQUADS, AND AMBULANCE SERVICES**

**Good afternoon Chairman Clippinger, Madam Vice Chair Atterbeary and members of the Judiciary 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 House Bill 586.**

**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 Delegate Bartlett does not 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.**

**The MSFA has had a good dialog with Delegate Bartlett regarding this original bill and verbally she has made changes to that original bill, but we have explained our concerns and at this time we must OPPOSE HB 586 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**