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MAJORITY WHIP

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on  
Cybersecurity, Information Technology,  
and Biotechnology

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

**Senate Bill 49 – State Government - Department of Information Technology -  
Cybersecurity**

Senate Bill 49 is inspired by a recently passed North Dakota law that provides local government entities with strategic cybersecurity planning support from the State Department of Information Technology. The former Maryland Chief Information Security Officer brought up this proposal at a Cybersecurity Council meeting over the interim, and the body, composed mostly of cybersecurity experts, has endorsed the concept. We have made this easy for you this session, as this bill is amended as it passed the House last year, and would now simply require additional manuals be printed for local government entities and allow them to discover what they don't know themselves, without a mandate. Unlike the Council bill that this committee recently passed for the Department, this bill puts more tailored resources into the hands of local governments that are the top targets over the past years, from Baltimore City Police, Baltimore City, Baltimore County Public Schools, and even the local states attorney's offices. We can't neglect these institutions that are a critical part of our state tapestry of government services.

In the long run, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, as Benjamin Franklin said when referring to the need for a fire department and standardized equipment. This quote is apt today in the context of cybersecurity. with the need for a public expense to prevent a worse unmitigated situation. Today, we must prepare for and respond to the digital fires that target governmental entities with a coordinated and uniform approach that mirrors best practices and prevents worse outcomes upfront, rather than scrambling on the back end to coordinate a response amidst the chaos of a disruption and its aftermath.

Please read the fiscal note of this bill, as it has changed from last year's version. We have won the implicit support of the local school systems, MML, and are willing to work with the institutions of higher education to make sure this is a base and not a ceiling for their cybersecurity strategies. Implementing

and regulating would be in the hands of the entities themselves. DoIT would merely support the design of and sign-off on the plans.

Maryland law requires towns, school districts and counties to prepare for fires and to have adequate fire extinguishers and sprinklers in place to mitigate tragedy, but we don't adequately prepare to confront foreseeable cyber disasters. All levels of our government must be equipped with the knowledge and tools to fight and prevent digital attacks and mishaps from becoming life threatening disasters. Government has a duty to deliver services to citizens without interruption from foreseeable circumstances like cyber disruptions. Our legislative offices get the fire manuals, and our local governments should get the cybersecurity manuals, which should also be tailored to their specific needs, and limited resources.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 49.