

Ron L. Watson, PhD
Legislative District 23B
Prince George's County

Joint Committee on Cybersecurity,
Information Technology and Biotechnology

Judiciary Committee



Annapolis Office
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 10th, 2021

Testimony in Support of HB879 – Maryland Emergency Management Agency – Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office – Establishment

To Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and the members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

I would first like to start off by thanking you all for your consideration for HB879. Last year the US Cyberspace Solarium Commission released a report on behalf of the federal government. The bipartisan report clearly states a glaring issue with the way we approach the issue of cybersecurity in the United States. The commission reported:

“The U.S government is currently not designed to act with the speed and agility necessary to defend the country in cyberspace ... We must get faster and smarter, improving the government’s ability to organize concurrent, continuous, and collaborative efforts to build resilience, [and] respond to cyber threats ...”

The issues that were included in the report were not unique to the federal government. Maryland also faces the same issues and potentially to a greater degree, accompanied with a lower level of preparedness to face these looming threats. HB879 seeks to address these issues by creating a Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency. This agency would be responsible for improving local, regional, and statewide measures and providing much needed resources in order to maintain a high level of cybersecurity readiness. From handling tasks such as developing prevalent cyber disruption plans to coordinating provisions of technical services, this office will be able to provide a regional and organizational approach to managing the risks of potential cybersecurity threats. As the old adage goes, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” and this bill seeks to implement that ounce of prevention that’s much needed for the state of Maryland. **For these reasons, I ask for a favorable report on HB0879.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron L. Watson".

Delegate Ron Watson

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