

SB101: Criminal Law - Public Safety - Interference With Agencies and Services -
Prohibitions Judicial Proceedings Committee

Wednesday, January 20, 2021, 1:00 PM

My name is William Ferretti. I am a former 9-1-1 Director for Montgomery County and also a former member of the Commission to Advance NG911 Across Maryland.

Working in the 9-1-1 center, I saw first hand the impact of annoying/harassing phone calls and denial of service attacks on a center's ability to effectively carry out its lifesaving mission in service to the public. I came to see that the Maryland Criminal Code was outdated with respect to addressing these crimes at present and this would likely be exasperated further with the technological changes being introduced as part of with Next Generation 9-1-1.

Coming from this vantage point, I was pleased to have this as one of many topics that were on the 2019 agenda for the Commission to Advance NG911 Across Maryland, and that the Commission also took this up in 2020.

I am strongly in favor of SB101. It seeks to address needed updates to the Maryland Criminal Code for telephone misuse, crimes involving the use of telecommunication systems for unauthorized access to computers, and using 9-1-1 centers as conduits for providing false information to law enforcement with illicit intent.

This legislation updates the telephone misuse statutes to account for the use of text and data within our telecommunications systems. It further seeks to increase the penalty for violations to that of a felony only when the target of this behavior is a 9-1-1 center, also known as a Public Safety Answering Point, or a public safety agency. The legislation also addresses the phenomenon known as SWATTING- providing fake information through a 9-1-1 center or public safety agency in order to garner an elevated police response. This is often done through the use of caller ID manipulation, known as spoofing, in order to send false information as part of the call or text for assistance. These activities endanger both the public and the responding law enforcement officers.

Cyber attacks have unfortunately become all too common in our world. Public Safety Agencies and 9-1-1 Centers have become targets for attacks using techniques such as Telephone Denial of Service (TDoS) and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS). These attacks can negatively impact a 9-1-1 center's ability to respond to emergency situations. Therefore this bill seeks to provide for enhanced penalties when the target of such attacks is a 9-1-1 center.

Finally, because the 9-1-1 center is the initial point of entry for a public safety response, there is the potential for misuse by providing false information in order to garner law enforcement response. This legislation seeks to provide enhanced penalties in these

instances especially when the result leads to serious bodily injury, whether that be a first responder or member of the public.

I urge you to support SB101 with a favorable recommendation.

Respectively,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William Ferretti". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "William" and last name "Ferretti" clearly distinguishable.

William Ferretti