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Committee

Chair

Government Operations and  
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Joint Committee on Administrative,  
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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg

Before the House Judiciary Committee

In Support Of

**House Bill 1227**

**Public Safety - Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism**

*“That attack, that siege, was criminal behavior, plain and simple, and it was behavior that we, the F.B.I., view as domestic terrorism. It’s got no place in our democracy.”*

- Christopher Wray, Director of the FBI<sup>1</sup>

Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee:

January 6th.

A date that before two months ago was just another date on our calendars. Now, it stands as a day of infamy - for one of the darkest days in the history of American democracy. The true consequences of that day are yet to be determined.

In a 2019 statement before a Congressional subcommittee, the Assistant Director of the Counterterrorism Division of the FBI stated, “the FBI takes very seriously the threat of domestic terrorism, and we have aligned our resources to reflect this...[including working with] federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial partners to combat the domestic terrorism threat.”<sup>2</sup> He went on to mention that some offices have personnel “solely dedicated to domestic terrorism investigations.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Goldman, Adam. “Domestic Terrorism Threat Is ‘Metastasizing’ in U.S., F.B.I. Director Says.” *New York Times*, March 2, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/02/us/politics/wray-domestic-terrorism-capitol.html>

<sup>2</sup> “Confronting White Supremacy.” Statement Before the House Oversight and Reform Committee, Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. June 4 2019. <https://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/confronting-white-supremacy>

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

While our federal officials are doing what is within their scope to investigate, prosecute, and counter domestic terrorism, the State of Maryland should not sit idle. We can and must respond.

House Bill 1227 would establish a Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism (“Task Force”). The goal of the Task Force is to study and make recommendations regarding policies and procedures for preventing and countering domestic terrorism.

The Task Force would examine the following issues; the role of the State, the degree of expenditure of any resources, ensuring transparency with the public, methods of funding, oversight procedures, and strategies to combat online extremism with consideration of 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment rights.

The Task Force must report its findings and recommendations, including legislation and budget appropriations, to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before December 31, 2021.

Last year, I introduced House Bill, 1164, Criminal Law – Domestic Terrorism. Chairman Clippinger subsequently wrote to Walter F. “Pete” Landon, Director of the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security, to report on the state’s “efforts and plans to prevent, detect, and address domestic terrorism.” A copy of that letter is included with my testimony.

We cannot let actions remotely like what occurred, happen again. In order to achieve that goal we need to provide resources to study the issue and provide stakeholders the authority to formulate recommendations to this body and the Governor.

I urge the Committee to act favorably on House Bill 1227.

March 9, 2021