



Maryland State Council
Safe Practice Safe Care

To: Maryland House Judiciary Committee 2021
House Office Building, Room 101
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair, Luke Clippinger
Vice Chair, Vanessa Atterbeary
Delegate Lauren Arian
Delegate Sandy Bartlett
Delegate Jon Cardin
Delegate Frank Conaway
Delegate Dan Cox
Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield
Delegate Debra Davis
Delegate Wanika Fisher
Delegate Robin Grammer
Delegate Michael Griffith
Delegate Jazz Lewis
Delegate Lesley Lopez
Delegate Michael Malone
Delegate Susan McComas
Delegate David Moon
Delegate Jesse Pippy
Delegate Emily Shetty
Delegate Ron Watson
Delegate Nicole Williams

From: Dr. Mary Zaleski

Date: March 2, 2021

Re: Maryland Emergency Nurses Association requests a FAVORABLE vote on
House Bill 1110 Criminal Law-Felony Second -Degree Assault-Emergency
Medical Care Workers

Good afternoon Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and members of the
Maryland House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Dr. Mary Zaleski and I am testifying on behalf of The Maryland State
Council of the Emergency Nurses Association. I am asking each of you for a

favorable vote on HB 1110 Criminal Law-Felony Second -Degree Assault-Emergency Medical Care Workers.

I am an emergency department nurse. I have been certified to teach a nationally recognized de-escalation program and coauthored a trauma informed communication de-escalation program implemented in Baltimore City. Many episodes of escalation can be managed with the right approach. Yet we will always have the episodes of violence that occur with intent. In August of 2018 I was assaulted while working in the emergency department. This was not the most severe assault I had experienced in my 26-year career; it was the most intentional and malicious attempt to cause harm to my physical person by an adult and the first time I chose to press assault charges. I appeared in court four times, called Baltimore City twice from my emergency department to have open bench warrants executed when the assailant was ready to be discharged from my emergency department. I was determined to follow this through. I believed the justice system would pursue this assault to full extent of the law, as I was assured by your committee it would be two years ago when I first testified about the event. The assailant spent seven months incarcerated for failure to appear and to follow court ordered counseling and drug rehabilitation. On September 16, 2020 the assailant was sentenced to time served for the assault. The assailant spent no time incarcerated for the assault. The assailant did not at any time appear remorseful for the attack. The assailant stated, "I just want to get out of here." In court.

I was appalled. The message I received from the Baltimore City Justice System was that failure to appear was a much more significant crime than intentionally assaulting an emergency department nurse. The justice system is not recognizing the negative impact that assaults on emergency department staff have.

Emergency department nurses are leaving the specialty and the profession daily from fear, burnout and the danger they face daily.

2020 was the year of global pandemic and the year of the nurse. We recognize the danger we face as we battle to save lives as a part of our calling. Emergency department staff are there to provide lifesaving treatments; or to comfort, holding their hands as one passes from this life. We are not there to be battered. Recognize the impact intentional violence in our workplace has on our staff with your support of this bill, no more silence on ED Violence.

Sincerely,

Mary Zaleski
9613 Heathcliff Dr

Baltimore, MD 21237
410-868-2337