

My name is Charles Ridgely, I am a lifelong resident of Maryland, currently residing in Frederick County. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the Flynn/Laird Act, House Bill 1052.

This testimony is prepared in order to provide you with a glimpse into the life and legacy of Lieutenant Nathan Flynn, the Howard County Firefighter that was killed in the Line of Duty and for whom HB 1052 is co-named. The fire that took Lieutenant Flynn's life involved non-arc resistant corrugated stainless-steel gas tubing, commonly referred to as CSST.

Nate Flynn was a resident of Havre de Grace, a man dedicated to his family and his community. He was a loving father to Alex, Gavin, Teagan, Connor, and Brecon. A loving husband to his wife, Celeste, and a dedicated public servant as a volunteer firefighter in Havre de Grace and a career firefighter in Howard County.

You didn't have to be around him for more than a few minutes to know that the only thing that Nate loved more than the fire service, was his family! He was absolutely dedicated to, and passionate about, both.

From the time that Firefighter Flynn was assigned to me until the night that he was killed, he never stopped trying to learn and give his very best. Every time that I walked into Fire Station

10, Nate was researching, learning, teaching, bettering himself and those around him in any way possible.

He constantly looked for “what went wrong” in an effort to determine what could we learn, what could we do differently, so that a life might be saved, or a tragedy averted.

On the night of July 23, 2018, Nate used every aspect of his knowledge and training in an effort to make things better for others. To save their lives, to protect their property, and ultimately trying to save his own life. But all of Nates training and efforts did not prevent that lightning induced, gas fed fire, from consuming that home and taking Nates life.

The fire that took Lieutenant Flynn’s life is not the only fire that has threatened the lives of Marylanders. Battalion Chief Josh Laird lost his life in August, 2021 in yet another fire involving CSST. This bill is named in their honor, but these are not the only fires involving CSST installed in Maryland homes.

I have served the citizens of Howard County for over 40 years. During my tenure I have served as a firefighter, a fire investigator, a fire officer, and a fire inspector. Serving in those capacities I have witnessed fires involving non-arc resistant CSST as far back as 2010. In addition, my current job duties involve the inspection of new residential construction. Despite the countless fires, and loss of life in the State of Maryland, non-arc resistant CSST continues to be installed in homes and

apartment buildings. I urge you to take action to protect Marylanders by supporting this legislation to prohibit the installation of non-arc resistant CSST. I would further recommend that consideration be given to referencing the most stringent testing and certification methods currently available such as ICC-ES-LC1027.

I have talked with Lieutenant Flynn's family and they want something positive to come from their loss. They know Nate would have wanted us to do everything we can to prevent these fires from occurring.

Nate would want us to learn, and take steps to prevent other families from suffering from the loss of their homes, their dreams, their loved ones.

In honor of Lieutenant Nathan Flynn, I would ask you to consider the safety of Maryland families and look favorably on HB 1052 the Flynn and Laird Act.

Thank you,

Charles H. Ridgely, IV

Fire Station 10 was home to the department's Special Operations Team and as such the firefighters assigned there were trained to deal with the plethora of emergencies beyond emergency medical services and fire related incidents faced by today's fire service.