



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

2201 Warwick Way, Marriottsville, MD 21104
410-313-6000

LOUIS G. WINSTON, FIRE CHIEF • CALVIN BALL, COUNTY EXECUTIVE

March 30, 2022

The Honorable Delores G. Kelly and Brian J. Feldman
3 East, Miller State Senate Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senators Kelly and Feldman,

I am writing on behalf of the Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue Services, and the family of Celeste Flynn, widow of Lieutenant Nathan Flynn, in order to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 1052, the Flynn and Laird Act.

Lieutenant Nathan Flynn lost his life in the line of duty while battling a house fire in Clarksville, Maryland on July 23, 2018, and leaves behind his widow Celeste and three young children. The cause of the fire was determined by Fire Investigators to be from a lightning strike in the vicinity of the home, which subsequently resulted in a failure of the Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing (CSST) gas service system in the home. The CSST line "arced" as a result of the lightning strike, causing fugitive gas to escape and ignite. The fire burned undetected in crawl space for some 30 minutes prior to the home owners being made aware and calling 911. It is not uncommon for CSST gas lines to be run in concealed spaces of a structure, therefor making the detection of a problem difficult and often delayed. While working to extinguish the fire, Lieutenant Flynn fell through the floor and into the crawl space where the fire had originated, and subsequently succumbed to his burn injuries.

Our Fire Department has documented several other incidents involving lightning strikes with the failure of the CSST lines, resulting in fire. Although these incidents did not result personal injury, the property loss in some cases were substantial. These occurrences have revealed a hidden danger for our firefighters, and all citizens of Maryland that have CSST gas service systems, and whom are we are sworn to protect.

I urge the Committee to report favorably in support of House Bill 1052, the Flynn and Laird Act, in order to ensure CSST gas piping systems are tested to highest industry standard available. In doing so, we will ensure that future installation of CSST is the safest product possible, to protect our fire service personnel and the citizens of the State of Maryland. On behalf of the fire service and the Flynn family, I appreciate your consideration of this life-saving legislation.

Sincerely,

Gordon Wallace, Deputy Fire Chief
Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue Services
410-313-5922