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Health and Government  
Operations Committee

*Subcommittees*

Health Occupations  
and Long Term Care

Insurance and Pharmaceuticals



*The Maryland House of Delegates*

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## **HB 760 States of Emergency and Catastrophic Health Emergencies- Renewals**

**March 1, 2022**

### **Health and Government Operations Committee**

#### **WHY DO WE NEED THIS LAW?**

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on how local government impacts our daily lives. Over the past two years, the voice of the people has been lost as we have navigated states of emergency, executive orders and public health mandates, and we need a course correction.

In the wake of the September attacks, the General Assembly passed a bill in 2002 that enhanced the Governor's emergency powers allowing Maryland's Governor to immediately assume emergency powers in the event of a threat or occurrence of any enemy attack, act of terrorism, or public health catastrophe.

The COVID-19 State of Emergency was the first time these powers were used in such an expansive manner, touching virtually every part of Marylander's lives.

Citizens with concerns or complaints about decisions or processes had little recourse outside of pursuing judicial remedy.

There is room for improvement in this process, no matter who is occupying the Governor's Office. Under the founding principle of balance of powers between three separate co-equal branches of government, the legislature, as direct representatives of the people, must have a role.

#### **WHAT DOES THIS BILL DO?**

HB760 requires the approval of the General Assembly to extend a State of Emergency beyond 60 days.

The entire General Assembly is not required to meet, approval is granted through the Legislative Policy Committee, which is comprised of presiding officers, committee chairs, and floor leadership from the majority and minority party. This will ensure that the Legislative branch of government has a say and ensures the balance of power is in place.

**I urge the Committee to favorably report HB760**