



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE**

February 8, 2022

Senate Bill 298 Criminal Law - Threat Against Public Health Official or Hospital Staff Member
Written Testimony Only

POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support with amendment for Senate Bill 298. HFAM represents over 170 skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as nearly 80 associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction in the state.

Senate Bill 298 would prohibit a person from making or sending a threat to a public health official or hospital staff member with the intent to intimidate, interfere with, or impede a public health official or hospital staff member from performing official duties. Any person that violates this Act is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to imprisonment of up to 90 days or a fine not exceeding \$500, or both.

We agree with the intent of this legislation and respectfully request that it be amended to also include protections for staff who work in skilled nursing facilities, assisted living communities, continuing care retirement communities, and adult day centers.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare workers in all settings have faced increased encounters with threats and harassment as they continue to provide quality care. Hostility and aggression towards healthcare professionals has grown over issues such as strict visitor restrictions and related COVID-19 policies, vaccination, and general misinformation.

Especially considering staffing shortages we already face in healthcare, it is critical that we give our healthcare heroes the support they need so they feel safe while doing their jobs to care for our family, friends, and neighbors.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report with amendment on Senate Bill 298.

Submitted by:

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