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**To:** Members of The Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**From:** Doyle Niemann, Chair, Legislative Committee, Criminal Law and Practice Section

**Date:** February 28, 2022

**Subject:** **SB881 – Criminal Law – False Statements – Emergency or Commission of a Crime (Anti-Swatting Act of 2022)**

**Position:** **Support**

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The Legislative Committee of the Criminal Law & Practice Section of the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) **Supports SB881 – Criminal Law – False Statements – Emergency or Commission of a Crime (Anti-Swatting Act of 2022).**

This bill prohibits a person from making a false claim of an emergency or the commission of a crime to 911, law enforcement, or an emergency report recipient that they know in whole or in part to be false with reckless disregard for possible harm. There are provisions providing for separate treatment for first-time juvenile offenders and more serious penalties if the false claim actually results in harm.

The bill is a response to a disturbing trend, sometimes referred to as “swatting,” in which individuals make false reports that precipitate serious police reaction that results in harm to innocent individuals. The bill fills a gap in the current law.

For the reasons stated, we **Support SB881 – Criminal Law – False Statements – Emergency or Commission of a Crime (Anti-Swatting Act of 2022).**

If you have questions about the position of the Criminal Law and Practice Section’s Legislative Committee, please feel free to address them to me at 240-606-1298 or at [doyleniemann@verizon.net](mailto:doyleniemann@verizon.net).