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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

**SB749: Public Safety - 3-1-1 Systems - Non-Emergency Information**

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Tuesday, March 8, 2022 | 1pm

Our 9-1-1 Specialists are often bombarded with non-emergency calls that distract them from the urgent need for police, fire, or paramedics. Currently, Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties offer 3-1-1 services.

During the 2021 Legislative Session, I introduced [SB631](#)-- a popular bill to create a workgroup to study a statewide 3-1-1 system. The bill passed the Senate unanimously (47-0), but the House Health and Government Operations Committee was enthusiastic about the idea but didn't think that legislation wasn't even needed. This offered the flexibility to convene key players more frequently and informally. Throughout the interim, I partnered with Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) Secretary Russell Strickland, 9-1-1, 3-1-1, 2-1-1, and Telecommunications and Cyber experts to navigate the various components of this potential statewide system.

Endorsed by the Governor, [SB749](#) would create a statewide 3-1-1 system to dramatically lighten the load at our 9-1-1 Centers while serving as a portal for government information. Statewide 3-1-1 would:

- Answer non-emergency questions, such as:
  - COVID test/vaccine locations or other public health inquiries;
  - Animal control;
  - Trash and recycling; or
  - Any other government services.
- Provide helpful information to rural residents lacking Broadband access or lower-income neighbors without Wi-Fi; and
- Increase career opportunities for 3-1-1 and 9-1-1 Specialists by:
  - Becoming a training opportunity for potential 9-1-1 Specialists; and
  - Giving longtime 9-1-1 Specialists a way to conclude their career by training and mentoring 3-1-1 Specialists.

This statewide 3-1-1 system (including a website) would be implemented by MDEM in collaboration with all 24 counties. The 3-1-1 program would be overseen by a new 3-1-1 Board (roughly patterned on our 9-1-1 Board) to develop statewide standards and provide oversight.

SB749 lays out a timeline for rolling out this system. By October of 2022, the 3-1-1 Board, with oversight by MDEM, would be established. A website would be established and counties must decide whether or not to join the statewide system or operate independently with oversight by the 3-1-1 Board by July 1, 2023. Counties that choose not to be a part of the statewide program would be responsible for:

- hiring and training personnel;
- acquiring approved technology; and
- providing a location or method for 3-1-1 Specialists to take calls.

The statewide 3-1-1 system would be fully operational no later than July 1, 2025.

The Next Generation 9-1-1 Commission that I chair enthusiastically supports the creation of a statewide 3-1-1 system. **I urge a favorable report on SB749.**