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Vice Chair

Education, Health, and
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Joint Audit Committee

Joint Committee on Federal Relations

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB83: Criminal Law - Public Safety - Interference with a Public Safety Answering Point

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Wednesday, January 19, 2022 | 1pm

This legislation came before the Judicial Proceedings Committee in both [2020](#) and [2021](#). After meeting with Committee Counsel over the summer, we have narrowed the scope of the legislation to better address the issue of disrupting and dismantling a 9-1-1 Center.

Nationwide, individuals have attempted to or successfully interfered with government systems and networks, including 9-1-1 Centers.

If PSAPs are interrupted, people cannot access life-saving services.

A resident and activist from my legislative district, Carl Henn, died because 9-1-1 was overwhelmed when he was in need. His death was the impetus for the NG911 Commission which I have chaired for the last four years.

The number of cyberattacks, including Telephone Denial of Service (TDoS) and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS), that cause damage have greatly increased in recent years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, bad actors have specifically targeted health and safety institutions. In the 3rd quarter of 2021, there was an average of over [1,000 DDoS attacks per day](#). A cyberattack that took place less than a month ago continues to impact services through the Maryland Department of Health. This was followed by a DDoS attempt and had significant effects on COVID-19 data sharing; vaccination records; licensure of nurses; Medicaid benefits; patient admission and discharge; and other areas critical to residents' health.

Unfortunately, these incidents are not new. In March of 2018, Baltimore's 9-1-1 Center was hacked. For 17 hours, incoming calls were not able to be relayed electronically to dispatchers and instead had to be manually managed by call center support.

Current Maryland law does not criminalize the interruption or interference of 9-1-1 Centers. Based on the recommendations of The NG911 Commission, I am sponsoring SB83 to better equip Maryland against these dangerous attacks by establishing penalties for these crimes. These include:

- Attempted 9-1-1 Center interruption: guilty of a felony, and upon conviction, subject to imprisonment not exceeding five years and/or a fine of up to \$25,000.
- Successful 9-1-1 Center interruption: guilty of a felony, and upon conviction, subject to imprisonment not exceeding ten years and/or a fine of up to \$50,000.

I urge a favorable report on SB83.