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Vice Chair
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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

House Judiciary Committee
Tuesday, March 29, 2022 | 1pm

Nationwide, individuals have attempted to, or successfully interfered with, government systems and networks, including 9-1-1 Centers. **If Public Safety Answering Points (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 Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) Commission that I have chaired for the last four years.

The number of cyberattacks, defined as Telephone Denial of Service (TDoS) and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS), have only increased in recent years. 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.

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 last December drastically impacted 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.

Current Maryland law does not criminalize the interruption or interference of 9-1-1 Centers. As amended by the Senate, [SB83](#) will deter nefarious parties from attacking PSAPs by making it a crime subject to penalties. These penalties will be the same as is currently in law for illegally interfering with other restricted networks:

- if the loss is \$10,000 or more—a felony and imprisonment up to 10 years and/or fine up to \$100,000.
- if the loss is less than \$10,000—a misdemeanor and imprisonment up to 5 years and/or a fine up to \$25,000.

Criminalizing TDoS and DDoS is a priority of the NG911 Commission. I urge a favorable report on SB83.