

HB0437:Criminal Law – Public Safety – Communications with Public Safety Answering Points

Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 1:00 PM

My name is William Ferretti. I am a former 9-1-1 Director for Montgomery County. I also had the pleasure to serve on the Commission to Advance NG9-1-1 Across Maryland, first as a member of the Commission, and then after my retirement from the County, as an advisor.

The delivery of Public Safety Services to the public is one of the most important functions of local government. Effective Public Safety responses to residents in need start with the first of the first responders in Maryland's 9-1-1 centers. Unfortunately, we as a state and a country have to contend with the phenomena known as SWATTING – intentionally providing fake information through a 9-1-1 center or public safety agency in order to garner an elevated police response, usually in an attempt to get SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) teams to be sent to the address of an innocent person.

Current Maryland Criminal Law is insufficient to deter these acts and because these acts can be done from afar, bringing charges that can lead to a successful prosecution is difficult, if not all but impossible. HB0437 seeks to provide enhanced felony penalties in these instances.

I urge you to support HB0437 with a favorable report with similar amendments as to those introduced in the Maryland Senate for the cross filled bill, SB0057.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Ferretti', written in a cursive style.

William Ferretti