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Executive Nominations Committee

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

**March 9, 2023**

**The Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**  
**SB 493 – Commission to Study Trauma Center Funding in Maryland**  
**Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza**

Thank you, Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the distinguished Senate Budget and Taxation Committee for allowing me to present Senate Bill 493 – Commission to Study Trauma Center Funding in Maryland.

Senate Bill 493 would establish a task force to study the adequacy of trauma funding across Maryland for operating, capital, and workforce costs, which according to the fiscal note, can be managed with existing resources and has no State or local impact. Typically, hospitals do not have the ability to adequately manage all forms of traumatic injury or staff the required sub-specialists needed for such intensive care. When a hospital commits to being a trauma center, they are required by statute to be staffed and equipped to swiftly treat severe life-threatening conditions such as falls, motor vehicle crashes, or gunshot wounds and provide resuscitative care. Trauma surgeons, other specialists, and ancillary support staff are required to be in-house or on-call 24 hours a day in a trauma center. All of this means that trauma centers require significant resources to operate effectively.

For background, in 2003, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation that created the Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund to aid Maryland's trauma system by reimbursing trauma physicians for uncompensated care losses and by raising Medicaid payments to 100% of the Medicare rate when a Medicaid patient receives trauma care at a designated trauma center. In the twenty years that have passed there has been no comprehensive review of this Fund despite the industry growing and evolving.

Unfortunately, the reason this legislation is before you is because we know the Fund is not as effective as it was intended to be. TidalHealth Peninsula Regional is the Eastern Shore's only trauma center and serves 500,000 residents and 3 million visitors each year, playing an integral part of Maryland Trauma Center System and it is critically underfunded. At last estimate, TidalHealth receives from the Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund less than 10% of the total cost it requires to remain a trauma center.

The State of Maryland is home to ten trauma centers that provide vital, lifesaving care every day. A thorough review of the trauma system is needed. I truly appreciate your kind attention and consideration, and I respectfully ask for a swift and favorable report on SB 493.