

**ISLAMIC CENTER OF MARYLAND**

19411 WOODFIELD ROAD  
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Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Guzzone:

Islamic Center of Maryland (ICM) would like to express our strong support for Senate Bill 874, which would establish Community Safety Works as an ongoing program within the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Established as a budget initiative within the Department, Community Safety Works has already provided valuable assistance to nonprofit organizations, businesses and local governments through targeted investments in crime prevention that impact community safety.

Founded in 1992, in addition to providing religious services for Muslims, ICM educates Muslims and people of all faiths on Islamic values, beliefs, practices and the role of Muslims as torch bearers of peace and harmony in their respective communities. Situated on 10-acre land in Montgomery County, MD, ICM is the largest Islamic center in the upper Montgomery County. It has a mosque, playgrounds, early-childhood care, social services office, Sunday school, and a full time school (recently opened), among other services offered. Recently, ICM finished and opened a two story 45000 sq-ft youth and community center building. This huge structure, a combination of contemporary and classical Islamic architecture, are visible landmarks on Route 124. The center is open 7 days a week with an average daily attendance of over 300. On Fridays, over 700 people attend the afternoon prayer services. On Sundays, ICM operates an all-day KG-12 grades level Sunday school which has an enrollment of around 400 students and about 200 teachers and volunteers. During the Islamic month of Ramadan over 1000 people attend evening services. ICM also serves daily evening meals during Ramadan, which is open to people of all faiths.

ICM has been a target of vandalism, hateful notes, break-ins, threatening phone calls, and 'drive-by-shouting', particularly in light of international or domestic events.

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On 3/22/19, in a bizarre hit and run case, an elderly person was badly injured inside the ICM parking lot (<https://patch.com/virginia/manassas/md-mosque-assaults-preceded-fatal-hit-run-manassas-police>). The same vehicle was involved in another incident at a Germantown mosque and a fatal incident in VA, killing a woman.

On 3/7/19, an individual broke into ICM facility and tried unsuccessfully to cut into the metal safes in the lobby to steal the cash donations (MCPD Case #190011200).

On 2/5/17, ICM's main office door was vandalized and broken into (MCPD case # 17-006298). Cash collected that is kept inside the office before being deposited was stolen.

On 5/3/11, a threatening note was dropped at the front entrance that praised the US operation that killed Osama bin Laden and warned that more is coming.

On 11/1/08, several structures at ICM were defaced by over 30 paintballs. (MCPD case # 08064997).

On 5/22/08, ICM office was broken into and surveillance system computer was destroyed. Two security cameras were also tampered.

We at ICM strongly believe that Bill 874 would establish a consistent and ongoing program for places of worship that can be targets of hate and vandalism to have access to funds to establish both preventive and intervention measure to safeguard against such threats. These would include security surveillance, physical prevention measures, incident response training, onsite security, perimeter barriers, etc. We have benefited in the past with such funding by implementing the required safety and security means, and it has raised confidence among the attendees and visitors, particularly parents and children who are regular attendees of ICM.

Again, we request a favorable report on SB874 to continue this valuable program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**Nazeer Ahmed.**

Trustee in Charge Facilities & Security  
Islamic Center of Maryland (ICM)