



The Honorable Melony G. Griffith, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

February 21, 2023

Re: Senate Bill #387 – Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times

Dear Senator Griffith and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of over 1000 members of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in Maryland, I strongly urge you to support SB#387. It would be a significant step in addressing a serious matter affecting the health and welfare of the citizens of our state, particularly those who are older, have serious medical issues, women and family caregivers.

According to recent data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Maryland has the longest Emergency Room (ER) wait time in 50 states. Maryland patients spend an average time of 228 minutes waiting in the ER—almost four hours. And Maryland has sustained this low ranking since 2015 -- years before the COVID pandemic began. Patients may leave the ER with no care after hours of frustration, or they may suffer and experience additional harm while waiting for care. Data show that increased wait time often result in increased death rates. ER Staff are forced to bear the brunt of angry and frustrated patients and families.

Maryland, which takes pride in being a progressive state, has failed miserably in addressing emergency room wait times and numerous AAUW members have horrific personal experiences to tell. It should not be so easy to find these stories. In addition, education and insurance are no protection for Maryland's ER problems.

SB #387 seeks to find a cost-effective, sensible solution by proposing to study best practices in ERs in states that are similar to Maryland. AAUW seeks your support to help us find what Maryland can do to provide the ER services our state needs and deserves.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anita L. Rosen', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Anita L. Rosen  
AAUW MD Public Policy Committee  
anitarosen123@gmail.com