

Greetings to Senator Griffith and members of Finance Committee from American Association of University Women (AAUW) which has over 1000 Maryland members.

I strongly urge you to support SB 387 because it is important to the health of women. Women's health is a priority on our national agenda. Most of our members are over 50, and as they age the number of hospital visits increases. We, and the younger women for whom we advocate, are very likely to be caretakers for family members. As caretakers of children or older relatives, or as seniors ourselves, we need to be confident that we can receive prompt care in our Maryland hospitals when it is needed. We do not need to be sitting in the emergency room with our children or grandchildren, or aging relatives, or even by ourselves, for long hours waiting to be called. People with so many illnesses in one place waiting for service is a health risk. Frustrated patients may give up and leave the ER without receiving the care they need. Others may see their situations deteriorate, causing additional harm, while waiting for care. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services find Maryland to have the longest ER wait time of all 50 states, nearly four hours, continuously since 2015, long before Covid began.

Maryland is so good at protecting its citizens in so many ways. This situation can be fixed. Maryland does not need to be the worst in the nation. Maryland can be among the best. SB 387 seeks to find a cost-effective patient-centered solution by studying best practices in states similar to Maryland. AAUW Maryland seeks your support to help find solutions make Maryland's ER's work in ways that Marylanders need and deserve.