



Allegany Garrett Counties Volunteer Fire Rescue Association
P.O. Box 935 Frostburg, MD 21532
agcvfra.net

Senate Finance Committee
Chair Senator Melony Griffith
January 31, 2023

Dear Committee,

The Allegany Garrett Counties Volunteer Fire Rescue Association is writing you today in full **support** of SB0048: Disaster Service and Uniformed Services Leave Modernization Act of 2023. This proposed new legislation takes the existing five days of annual Disaster Service Leave offered to State employees for Red Cross disaster volunteerism and expands the availability of that leave to other NGOs, including **volunteer fire and EMS departments**. In effect, State employees who are volunteers of Fire/EMS organizations are eligible for up to 5 days of paid leave per year for disaster leave in conjunction with service to local fire/EMS departments. This can be impactful during times of extreme stress on the emergency response system - freeing up additional personnel to surge to support local operations. Fire and EMS departments across the state, including those in Allegany and Garrett Counties, are in dire need of volunteers. This legislation could positively impact operations during times of need.

As this proposed legislation continues through the committee, we offer our full support and will provide additional testimony if the occasion arises.

Sincerely,
Austin Christner, President
Jonathan Dayton, MS, NREMT, CNE, Vice President, Public Information Officer, and Legislative Committee Chairperson

The mission of the Allegany and Garrett Counties Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association is to serve, promote, advocate and represent the interests of the volunteer fire, rescue, and emergency medical services in Allegany and Garrett Counties.