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*Legislative District 11*  
Baltimore County

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on Children, Youth,  
and Families

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake  
and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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## *The Senate of Maryland*

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN SB 785 MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE OF DOMESTIC TERRORISM RESPONSE

In December 2022, the Maryland Department of Emergency Management submitted the Summary Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism. This report highlighted much needed actions to combat domestic terrorism in Maryland. SB 785 codifies the recommendations of the Task Force into state law and makes clear that the State of Maryland does not – and will never – tolerate violent extremism.

Unfortunately, domestic terrorism in the United States is on the rise. While the attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021 will forever be etched in history, it was not a one-off event. Since the insurrection, we have seen those in our country who defend and applaud domestic terrorism and hate crimes – who wrongfully characterize this behavior as patriotism. The State of Maryland is not immune to these threats. Indeed, just last month, the FBI charged a woman from Baltimore County with conspiring with a neo-Nazi leader in Florida to destroy energy facilities surrounding Baltimore City. We must address this behavior in a systematic way to keep Maryland families and communities safe.

SB 785 addresses violent extremism in our state by establishing an Office of Domestic Terrorism Response in the Department of Emergency Management. The Office will work with federal, state, and local agencies to:

1. Maximize the roles of colleges and universities in researching and developing professional training on how to combat violent extremism
2. Raise awareness among the public about violent extremism, especially in regard to hate crimes, domestic terrorism, and international terrorism
3. Develop multidisciplinary interventions for those at risk of becoming radicalized
4. Facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals who participate in violent extremism

The bill also requires the Office and Department to report to the General Assembly and the Governor annually on its activities, recommended legislation, and resources required to carry out its purpose and duties.

One of the recommendations by the Task Force was for the State to invest in permanent capabilities to address and prevent violent extremism. Action is needed now to protect our citizens.

**SB 785 is that action.**

I urge a favorable report on SB 785, and I thank you for your consideration.