



EMERGENCY NURSES
ASSOCIATION

Maryland State Council
Safe Practice Safe Care

To: Maryland Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Date: March 14, 2023

Re: **SB 568 Criminal Law-Threat Against State or Local Official – First Responder**
FAVORABLE Oral and written testimony

Good day, Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldestreicher, and Committee members,

My name is Lisa Tenney, and I am testifying on behalf of The Maryland Emergency Nurses Association in favor of SB 598 Criminal Law-Threat Against State or Local Official – First Responder.

The question of the day is why should first responders receive special protection under the law, alongside state and local officials, when threatening behavior interferes with our ability to do our job? The answer is “time.”

Firefighters, paramedics, EMTs, other rescue squad members, emergency physicians, and emergency nurses run in and save lives. We are the ones who come to the rescue of Maryland’s adult and pediatric citizens when they are victims of fire, trauma, and life-threatening surgical and medical emergencies. Our success in saving them or at least minimizing a resulting disability often depends on response “time.” Every second counts.

- In a heart attack, blood flow needs to be restored to the heart muscles.
- In a stroke, blood flow needs to be restored to brain tissue.
- Limiting tourniquet time to two hours to stop bleeding saves lives and limbs.
- In trauma, that “golden hour” of getting a trauma patient to definitive care, provides the patient with the best chance of survival with good neurological outcomes.
- When someone is not breathing, permanent brain damage can occur in 4 minutes, with death in 4 to 10 minutes. Time matters.

Interference by threatening people when first responders are trying to save lives, causes delays in care and response times. At least one caregiver is taken away from the patient to manage the threatening person, who must try to deescalate the threat and remove the person from the scene. The person causing the interference needs to be held accountable. SB 598 will accomplish this in real time.

Thank you in advance for a favorable bipartisan review.

Sincerely,

Lisa Tenney

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