



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Russell J. Strickland | Secretary

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS - SB0785
Maryland Department of Emergency Management -
Office of Domestic Terrorism Response

Maryland Department of Emergency Management
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Hearing Date: 01 MAR 2023

Chairman William C. Smith, Jr.
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 20401

Chairman Smith, Jr.,

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) writes today **in support with amendments of SB0785 - Maryland Department of Emergency Management - Office of Domestic Terrorism Response.**

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management is the principal department responsible for ensuring Maryland is adequately prepared to deal with emergencies that are beyond the capabilities of local authorities. This bill would establish a new Office of Domestic Terrorism within MDEM to “prepare for, prevent, and recover from domestic terrorism and hate crimes.”

MDEM recognizes and appreciates the work of the Maryland Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism and supports efforts to increase prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery coordination through a whole community approach. The two reports developed and submitted by the Task Force reflect thoughtful consideration of the complexities around domestic terrorism and violent extremism. The most recent [report recommended](#) that there be, “a permanent coordinating office - equipped with financial and personnel resources, executive authority, and a chain of command - intended to facilitate a multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral task force to advance this mission,” (p. 6).



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Subsections (C)(3) and (C)(4) requires MDEM to, “(3) develop multidisciplinary interventions for at-risk individuals; and (4) facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals who participate in violent extremism,” (p. 3, lines 1-4). MDEM agrees these efforts as a key part of combating violent extremism, however the Department lacks the subject matter expertise in areas like social work, public health, and the justice system to be able to carry out the requirements in this bill. MDEM respectfully requests the bill be amended to remove these requirements.

MDEM thanks the Committee for your consideration, and urges a **FAVORABLE REPORT WITH AMENDMENTS on SB785**. Please contact Anna Sierra, legislative liaison, at anna.sierral@maryland.gov with any questions.



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Additional Background

In 2021, MDEM (MEMA at the time) was required by the Joint Chairmen's Report "to convene the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism to determine how to effectively oppose domestic terrorism in Maryland..." (p. 41). The General Assembly at the time expressed concern regarding the rising threat of domestic terrorism in Maryland, and required MDEM to detail how Homeland Security Grant Program funds had been expended to support programs to counter domestic terrorism. MDEM submitted the report as required on November 15, 2021, and it can be found on the DLS [mandated reports website](#).

In 2022, the Joint Chairmen's Report required MDEM to continue holding "regular meetings," of the Task Force with the same membership identified in 2021 (p. 40-41). The task force was asked to:

- Review domestic terrorism threats from all potential sources
- Offer suggestions and guidance to MDEM on such areas as the following:
 - Coordinating with federal, State, and local agencies;
 - Consulting with the academic community
 - Working with public health professionals
 - Seeking new grant opportunities for the State;
 - Identifying trends in domestic terrorism; and
 - Collecting and implementing best practices

A summary report on the task force work was submitted as required on December 1, 2022 and it can be found on the DLS [mandated reports website](#).