



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William Smith, Jr., Chair and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Natasha Mehu, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 15, 2023

RE: **SB 450** – Real Property - Limitations on Summoning Law Enforcement or Emergency
Services - Prohibition

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT SB 450**. This bill prohibits landlords and local governments from limiting or prohibiting a tenants' ability to summons law enforcement and emergency services for assistance and prohibits them for penalizing or retaliating against tenants for doing so.

SB 450 addresses important public policy and public safety concerns by prohibiting actions that could put residents, their guests, and neighbors at risk. It is impossible to predetermine what counts as an emergency and impractical to limit or deter someone from contacting law enforcement or emergency services when they believe they need emergency assistance. A tenant who unfortunately finds themselves in genuine need of assistance should not hesitate to summon police, fire, or EMS simply because they've requested assistance before. They certainly should not be put in a situation where their housing or fines are threatened for making such calls. To allow this to happen is bad public policy and could irresponsibly put some of our most vulnerable residents in a position to experience abuse or housing insecurity.

The protections in this bill align with other lease provisions that are prohibited under law in the interest of protecting residents against abusive practices. It's important to note that landlords and governments may still address actual nuisance actions and problematic tenants. The bill simply makes clear that solely summoning law enforcement or emergency services to the property cannot be used to take certain actions against tenants.

It is impossible to compile an exhaustive list of emergency events for which a tenant or individual could need assistance. The only way to protect the health and safety of tenants and their guests is to prohibit such punitive clauses in leases or in local ordinances. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT SB 450** and urge a **FAVORABLE** Committee report.