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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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SB1068: Statewide 2-1-1/3-1-1

Education, Energy, Environment (& Elections!) Committee

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Nationally, approximately 30-35% of 9-1-1 calls are for non-emergency situations, according to Brian Fontes, CEO of the National Emergency Number Association. In some areas, however, this figure can be much higher. As the Baltimore Sun reported in 2022, up to 80% of 9-1-1 calls in Baltimore City were for non-emergency services.¹ A 2022 nine-city survey found more than 62% of calls specifically for police assistance were not emergencies.² These calls delay our 9-1-1 Specialists from providing assistance to those with an urgent need for police, firefighters, or paramedics—endangering lives.

As introduced, [SB1068](#) would have created a combined, Statewide 2-1-1/3-1-1 system to lighten the load at our 9-1-1 Centers while serving as an information hub for government and nonprofit services, resources, and information. The Next Generation 9-1-1 Commission I chaired unanimously endorsed the creation of a statewide 3-1-1 system to relieve pressure on our 9-1-1 Centers. While I believe that Statewide 2-1-1/3-1-1 would have been a game-changer for how Marylanders interact with their government, it is clear that this program would be too expensive to implement in these fiscally challenging times.

After consultation with the Moore/Miller Administration and the Departments of Human Services (DHS), Emergency Management (MDEM), Information Technology (DoIT), and others, I believe there may be an effective and much less expensive solution: a statewide 3-1-1 portal.

A 3-1-1 portal could give our constituents information on state, county, and local government services, resources, and information. Currently, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties, as well as Baltimore City, provide 3-1-1 services. A Marylander's zip code should not determine access to information or government services. Although this bill will not move in its current form this session, I will continue to work to ensure that our 9-1-1 system is protected and that all Marylanders can find the services they need to thrive.

I urge continued thought on the issues raised by SB1068. Our neighbors deserve nothing less.

¹<https://www.baltimoresun.com/2022/05/18/80-of-baltimore-911-calls-are-non-emergencies-a-new-plan-will-make-the-department-more-efficient-officials-say/>

² <https://www.vera.org/news/most-911-calls-have-nothing-to-do-with-crime-why-are-we-still-sending-police>