Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Katie Savage | Secretary

TO: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Department of Information Technology
RE: Senate Bill 496 - Criminal Law - Interference With a Public Safety Answering Point - Penalties
DATE: February 9, 2024
POSITION: Support

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Smith,

The Department of Information Technology (DoIT) supports Senate Bill 496 - Criminal Law - Interference With a Public Safety Answering Point - Penalties. This bill aims to address and deter interference with public safety answering points. Public safety answering points play a critical role in ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities by handling emergency calls and dispatching appropriate response teams.

The proposed amendments to Article 7-302 of the Criminal Law are essential in addressing intentional and unauthorized actions that may interrupt or impair the functioning of a public safety answering point. By explicitly prohibiting such activities and imposing significant penalties, the bill seeks to safeguard the integrity and effectiveness of these crucial communication hubs.

The inclusion of specific provisions related to the possession of ransomware with malicious intent is particularly commendable. This demonstrates a forward-thinking approach to addressing evolving threats in the digital landscape and reinforces the importance of protecting our public infrastructure.

Furthermore, the bill establishes appropriate penalties for violations, distinguishing between misdemeanors and felonies based on the severity of the offense. These penalties send a clear message that interference with public safety answering points is a serious offense that will be met with significant consequences.

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For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Information Technology respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 496.

Best,

Katie Olson Savage
Secretary
Department of Information Technology