



THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 26, 2024

Acting Director Travis A. Nelson  
Governor's Office of Homeland Security  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21404

Dear Acting Director Nelson:

Thank you for your letter dated February 23, 2024, regarding the 2022 recommendations of the *Maryland Task Force on Preventing & Countering Domestic Terrorism*. We appreciate the Moore-Miller Administration's commitment to creating a safer Maryland for all by acknowledging the real threat and risk domestic terrorism poses here. One of the key recommendations of the task force was to create and ***“establish a permanent coordinating office – equipped with financial and personnel resources, executive authority, and a chain of command – intended to facilitate a multidisciplinary and multisectoral task force to advance this mission.”*** And while we appreciate that there is some overlap with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security (GOHS), it is crucial that we understand how the issue of domestic terrorism will be specifically addressed there.

In addition to the recommendation of a more permanent office, the task force also identified some key findings. It would be helpful to understand how GOHS can accomplish these recommendations utilizing the resources currently available. Specifically, the task force studied at length for over 2 years the challenges with violent extremism and approaches to violence prevention. The following additional recommendations were made:

- Invest in a permanent task force with a name modification to **Violent Extremism Prevention Task Force (VEPTF)** that is focused on violent extremism prevention to include not only domestic terrorism, but also homegrown violent extremism associated with international terrorism, as well as hate crimes.
- Adopt an approach to violence prevention that includes primary prevention (e.g., raising awareness of violent extremism, increasing trust and lines of communication between communities and local government), secondary prevention (e.g., multidisciplinary interventions for at-risk individuals) and tertiary prevention (e.g., rehabilitation and reintegration).

**Can GOHS commit to bringing together members of the task force together on a quarterly basis to monitor, research and identify trends, and implement best practices to combat extremism in Maryland?** As you know there is pending legislation (SB755/HB1154) which would require the Governor to create a permanent Office of Domestic Terrorism. We would be willing to withdraw the bills if we can get a more solidified reassurance that each item identified in the 2022 recommendations can be implemented under GOHS. **Finally, there should be a designated staff member assigned within GOHS to oversee this work.**

We appreciate your commitment to combatting extremism in all its forms and look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Shelly Hettleman in a cursive script.

Senator Shelly Hettleman

Handwritten signature of Sandy Rosenberg in a cursive script.

Delegate Sandy Rosenberg

Handwritten signature of Howard Libit in a cursive script.

Howard Libit, BJC

Handwritten signature of Meredith R. Weisel in a cursive script.

Meredith R. Weisel, ADL