



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 404 - Law Enforcement - Wellness Checks - Requirements (Gabriel's Law)

SPONSOR: Delegates Woods, *et al.*

HEARING DATE: February 27, 2024

COMMITTEE: Judiciary

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 404 - Law Enforcement - Wellness Checks - Requirements (Gabriel's Law)**, which requires a law enforcement agency that receives a "qualified request" for a wellness check of an individual to immediately (1) conduct a wellness check of the individual, if they are located in the law enforcement agency's jurisdiction or (2) submit a request to the relevant law enforcement agency in the State or another state to conduct a wellness check, if the individual is not located in the law enforcement agency's jurisdiction. A law enforcement agency that receives a qualified request must meet these requirements regardless of the location of who is making the qualified request.

In Prince George's County, all welfare check requests are sent through our Public Safety Communications (PSC), which is a different entity from the Prince George's County Police Department (PGPD). PSCs, who receive such requests as well as dispatch the call, are trained to ask pertinent questions to determine if this is a life-threatening situation before dispatching a police officer. Additionally, PGPD is ill equipped to have a call waiting in queue then answering it for out of priority protocol. The line officer would not have access to nationwide phone numbers as fast as PSC. We offer the friendly amendment (included after the testimony) that expands the requirements regarding receiving and directing a qualified wellness check request to include PSCs.

Additionally, it is not uncommon for Fire/EMS to deal with a wellness check in Prince George's County. We include in our amendment language adding Fire/EMS to the requirements regarding the responding agencies for a wellness check.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 404 WITH AMENDMENTS** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.

Prince Georges County Executive

Proposed Amendments to HB 404

Article – Public Safety

3-531.

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) “QUALIFIED REQUEST” MEANS AN ORAL OR WRITTEN REQUEST THAT INCLUDES SUFFICIENT INFORMATION REGARDING A SPECIFIC LIFE-THREATENING CONCERN FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION OR RESPONSE.

(3) “WELLNESS CHECK” MEANS AN IN-PERSON VISIT BY ~~A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER~~ AN OFFICER OR FIRST RESPONDER OF A RESPONDING PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY CONCERNING THE WELL BEING OF AN INDIVIDUAL.

(4) “RESPONDING PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY” MEANS A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OR A FIRE DEPARTMENT LOCATED IN THE JURISDICTION THAT RECEIVES A QUALIFIED REQUEST.

(B) (1) IF A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OR PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY RECEIVES A QUALIFIED REQUEST FOR A WELLNESS CHECK OF AN INDIVIDUAL LOCATED IN THE ~~LAW ENFORCEMENT~~ AGENCY’S JURISDICTION, THE ~~LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY~~ RESPONDING PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY SHALL IMMEDIATELY CONDUCT A WELLNESS CHECK OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

(2) IF A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OR PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY RECEIVES A QUALIFIED REQUEST FOR A WELLNESS CHECK OF AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS NOT LOCATED IN THE ~~LAW ENFORCEMENT~~ AGENCY’S JURISDICTION, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OR PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY SHALL IMMEDIATELY TRANSFER THE CALL OR SUBMIT ~~A~~ THE QUALIFIED REQUEST AND CALLER CONTACT INFORMATION TO THE RELEVANT LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OR PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY IN THE STATE OR ANOTHER STATE ~~TO~~ CONDUCT A WELLNESS CHECK OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

(C) A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OR PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY THAT RECEIVES A QUALIFIED REQUEST UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION REGARDLESS OF WHERE THE

**INDIVIDUAL OR ENTITY MAKING THE QUALIFIED REQUEST IS
LOCATED.**

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
October 1, 2024.