

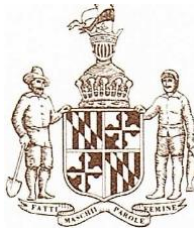
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Health and Government
Operations Committee

Subcommittees
Government Operations and
Health Facilities

Public Health and Minority
Health Disparities



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 19, 2024

SUPPORT – HB0070 CRIMINAL LAW – PUBLIC SAFETY – INTERFERENCE WITH A PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT – PENALTIES

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

HB0070 addresses the targeted, deliberate disruption and dismantling of 9-1-1 Call Centers, also known as Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP).¹ This bill is an upshot of the work of the Next Generation 9-1-1 Commission and its recommendations for strengthening state statutes around these dangerous, costly, and increasingly common activities that interrupt and hinder critical emergency response infrastructures. Similar legislation was introduced in the 2020, 2021, and 2022 and a workgroup formed in 2022 to focus on how to best define and deter the targeted disruption of emergency response services and penalize those who attack them. 2023's HB744/ SB0405, one of two resulting bills, **passed the House 135-0** but did not receive a vote in this committee. **HB0070** is the reintroduction of that bill and is in the same posture as the bill that passed the House. The second bill, The Antiswatting Act of 2023, was signed into law.

Incidents in which individuals or groups attempt to, or successfully, interfere with or disrupt government systems and networks, including 9-1-1 call centers, are on the rise.¹ PSAP interruptions put the overall safety of communities at risk and jeopardize Marylanders' ability to access and receive life-saving services. In the third quarter of 2021, there was an average of over 1,000 DDoS attacks per day.^{2,3,5}

The most common methods of attacks are:

- **Telephone Denial of Service (TDoS)** involves a large volume of malicious calls made to public service response systems with the aim of overwhelming the system.^{2,3,4}
- **Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS)** involves a large volume of malicious electronic traffic generated and directed to overwhelm a site and disrupt its service.

Under **HB0070s** increased penalties, when such efforts are directed with the intent of disrupting the functioning of a PSAP, a violator would be guilty of a felony, punishable by imprisonment for up to 5 years and/or a maximum fine of \$25,000. If the attack results in the disruption and functioning of a PSAP, the individual(s) would be guilty of a felony, punishable by imprisonment for up to 10 years and/or a maximum fine of \$50,000.

To protect Maryland's critical government and emergency response infrastructures and better ensure the proper, round-the-clock operating of our emergency reporting and response systems, I ask for a favorable report on **HB0070**.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Terri Hill", written over a horizontal line.

¹ [Considerations for Cyber Disruptions in an Evolving 911 Environment, April 2023 \(cisa.gov\)](#); ² [Telephony Denial of Service Attacks: Lessons Learned from a Public Safety Answering Point](#); ³ [Cyber Incident Response to Public Safety Answering Points: A State's Perspective](#); ⁴ [Cyber Risks to 911 Telephony Denial of Service](#); ⁵ [CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT GUIDE Additional DDoS Guidance for Federal Agencies](#).