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WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 3, 2025

To: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

On behalf of the **Maryland Women's Caucus**, we are pleased to express our **unanimous support** for **SB 164: Terminology and Obsolete References – Maryland State Firefighters Association and Related Terms**, sponsored by **Senator Cheryl Kagan**. This important legislation updates outdated, gendered terminology in state law, such as replacing “firemen” and “rescue squad men” with more inclusive terms like **firefighters**, ensuring that all of Maryland’s first responders are properly recognized and represented.

For decades, **women and non-male first responders have served with distinction**, yet they continue to be excluded by antiquated language that does not reflect the reality of today’s workforce. **SB 164 affirms the contributions of all firefighters and emergency responders, regardless of gender**, and ensures that Maryland’s laws reflect a **modern, inclusive approach** to public service.

This bill is not merely about terminology—it is about **representation, inclusion, and equity**. Words matter, and by updating these references, Maryland sends a strong message to young women and girls that **they belong in the fire service and emergency response fields**. Removing outdated language also **promotes diversity and respect within our public safety agencies**, reinforcing the values of fairness and equal opportunity.

We **respectfully urge** the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a **favorable report** for **SB 164**. By passing this legislation, Maryland will take an important step toward **ensuring that all first responders—regardless of gender—are acknowledged and appreciated for their dedication and service to our communities**.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to making Maryland a more equitable and inclusive state.