



Promoting support, research, treatment, and public policies that improve and save lives

Testimony on HB46

Senate Finance and Judicial Proceeding Committees

From: Evelyn Burton, Maryland Advocacy Chair, Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance

Position: Support with Amendment

March 19, 2025

The Schizophrenia and Psychosis Action Alliance supports HB468 with an amendment to encourage the use of de-escalation techniques, where safe, prior to the use of force in the execution of an emergency petition by a peace officer.

We acknowledge that peace officers require clarity in the law to be able to use force when necessary. However, by only mentioning use of force in reference to Section 3-524 of the Public Safety Article, it is not clear that other provisions of that section, including the sections on de-escalation apply.

Our amendment would make clear that an emergency petition should be executed by a peace officer in accordance with all of the provisions of 3-524 of the Public Safety Article, including the de-escalation provisions, not just the use of force provisions.

The use of force is traumatic for the evacuee and greatly increases the risk of serious harm and even death to the evacuee and the officer. It also greatly increases the risk of criminal charges against the evacuee who often does not understand what is happening and may resist the use of force. Therefore to encourage the use of de-escalation techniques and full compliance with all of the provisions of 3-524 of the Public Safety Article we suggest the following amendment.

On page 3, § 10–624(a), amend paragraph (3), as follows:

(3) A PEACE OFFICER SHALL EXECUTE A PETITION IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 3–524 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE, INCLUDING DE-ESCALATION AND USE OF FORCE PROVISIONS.