



**Bill:** House Bill 580 –*Terminology and Obsolete References*  
(*Maryland State Firefighters Association and Related Terms*)

**Sponsor:** Delegate Thomas S. Hutchinson

**Hearing Date:** February 25, 2025

**Position: SUPPORT**

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Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

The Maryland Commission for Women is in strong support of House Bill 580, which formally updates the statute to use gender neutral terms “firefighter” and “squad member” instead of the antiquated “firefighter” and “squadman.” This proposal comes after the Maryland State Firefighters Association (MSFA) made the formal decision to adopt a new, inclusive name.

On June 18, 2024, the MSFA made history by officially announcing its transition to the Maryland State Firefighters Association—a change that honors the service of all firefighters, regardless of gender and signals to future generations of female firefighters that they are fully welcomed in the profession.

The Maryland Commission for Women is charged with working across the state to advance women’s workplace rights and opportunities. We worked for several years with the association formerly known as the Maryland State Firemen’s Association to urge them to take this step to modernize its name. Now, we are making a similar request to the legislature to update the statute to reflect the same inclusivity.

HB 580 is a necessary next step in ensuring that Maryland’s statute reflects this progress. Updating outdated references in state statute will reinforce our commitment to gender equity and ensure that Maryland’s firefighters—men and women alike—are properly recognized for their contributions.

The Commission thanks Delegate Hutchinson for introducing this legislation and respectfully urges this committee to pass HB 580. Our Executive Director Ariana Kelly is available to answer any further questions at [Ariana.Kelly@Maryland.Gov](mailto:Ariana.Kelly@Maryland.Gov).

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