



Maryland State's Attorneys' Association

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DATE: **January 28, 2025**

BILL NUMBER: **SB 287**

POSITION: **Favorable**

The Maryland State's Attorneys' Association (MSAA) supports Senate Bill 287 and urges this Committee to issue a favorable report.

The right to freely practice one's religion is a right not only enshrined in our Constitution but woven into the shared cultural fabric of our nation. Marylanders should have confidence that their right to attend religious services will be protected and defended at every level of government.

SB 287 gives prosecutors the tools to hold accountable those that would target religious communities and obstruct individuals seeking to attend a religious service. Modeled after similar laws that have successfully protected access to medical facilities, this bill establishes reasonable sanctions for impeding access to or egress from a religious facility, telegraphing the seriousness with which the State of Maryland takes this conduct.

Importantly, this bill establishes protections for religious communities in a way that respects other important, and constitutionally protected, activity, striking an appropriate balance in a way that will survive constitutional scrutiny. Because this bill provides necessary protections for individuals exercising their religious freedom and ensures that faith communities can continue to gather without fear, MSAA urges a favorable report.