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Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee
Education Subcommittee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1030 – Vehicle Laws – Lighting on
Privately Owned Vehicles**

March 11, 2025

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 1030 - *Vehicle Laws – Lighting on Privately Owned Vehicles*, which seeks to improve the safety and effectiveness of volunteer emergency medical services (EMS) officers in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. This legislation clarifies existing law to ensure that nonprofit volunteer EMS organizations can continue to safely and efficiently use emergency lighting on their personal vehicles while responding to emergencies.

Clarifying Existing Authorization

Senate Bill 1030 is intended to address a gap in the current law by providing a clear, legal framework for volunteer EMS organizations to equip certain officers with emergency lights on their personal vehicles. One example of an organization this bill benefits is Hatzalah of Baltimore, a volunteer rescue squad that has been operating since 2005. Hatzalah, like many volunteer EMS organizations, works directly with and is regularly called upon by the Baltimore Fire Department. Since its inception, Hatzalah has treated an average of 1,800 patients per year, helping tens of thousands and saving countless lives.

In 2020, Hatzalah approached the Maryland Vehicle Administration (MVA) to address delays in their ability to respond to emergencies due to traffic. They sought to secure proper authorization to use emergency lights on their vehicles, and the MVA granted this authorization. Since then, Hatzalah has been using emergency lights for high-priority calls, significantly improving response times for emergencies where every second counts.

However, after recent discussions with the MVA, they advised that the use of emergency lights on volunteer EMS vehicles was not entirely clear in the law. Therefore, while the MVA is currently allowing these vehicles to continue using the lights without issue, they have requested legislation eliminate any ambiguity. This bill will ensure that Hatzalah, as well as other volunteer EMS organizations, can continue operating without concern for potential legal uncertainty.

What Senate Bill 1030 Does

Senate Bill 1030 clarifies the existing law by specifically authorizing nonprofit volunteer EMS organizations in Baltimore City and Baltimore County to equip up to five of their highest-ranking officers' privately owned vehicles with emergency lights. These lights, which may be red or red-and-white, can only be used while the officers are en route to or at the scene of an emergency.

Urging Your Support for Senate Bill 1030

This bill is not creating new rights or privileges—it is merely clarifying and formalizing an existing practice to ensure that nonprofit volunteer EMS organizations can continue to serve their communities without interruption. By passing Senate Bill 1030, we are removing any legal ambiguity and providing a simple solution that will improve the efficiency of volunteer EMS responses, enhance public safety, and provide clarity for both volunteer organizations and law enforcement.

I respectfully ask for your support in passing this important bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dalya" followed by a stylized flourish.

Senator Dalya Attar