

**House Bill 1308
Crime of Violence – Medical Facilities and Places of Worship – Penalty
(Sacred Places Safety Act)**

Position: Favor with Amendment

March 11, 2025

House Judiciary Committee

University of Maryland Faculty Physicians, Inc. (“FPI”) and the University of Maryland School of Medicine (the “SOM”) respectfully submit this letter requesting amendment to House Bill 1308 – Crime of Violence – Medical Facilities and Places of Worship – Penalty (Sacred Places Safety Act) (“HB 1308”). FPI provides oversight, management, and administrative support services to its affiliated physician practice groups, including the faculty practices of the SOM. As introduced, HB 1308 would prohibit crimes of violence in a medical facility or a place of worship. Those who violate the Act would be guilty of a felony and, on conviction, be subject to imprisonment of up to 10 years.

HB 1308 intends to address the increasing and unacceptably high levels of violence occurring at medical facilities and places of worship. For physician practices and hospitals, provider and staff safety are crucial to retention and creating a healing environment. Committing a crime of violence within a medical facility should be a felony subject to minimum sentencing guidelines, as the sponsors are proposing. FPI and SOM strongly support the legislature addressing these goals.

HB 1308 refers to the existing Section 14-101 of the Criminal Law title in defining a “crime of violence.” However, in reviewing the list of crimes of violence, the bar is too high to address the violent incidents most commonly seen in health care. E.g., only first-degree assault under Md. Code Criminal Law § 3-202 is included as a crime of violence, while second-degree assault is omitted. First-degree assault requires either strangling, use of a firearm, or intentionally causing or attempting to cause “serious” physical injury. Thankfully, assaults occurring within our facilities rarely rise to this level. However, even assaults that do not have potential for “serious” injury disrupt care, remain traumatic for everyone involved, and should not be tolerated.

We respectfully request the following change:

- Amend the definition of second-degree assault within Md. Code, Criminal Law § 3-203(c)(2). This subsection provides that a person may not intentionally cause “physical injury” to certain listed first responders engaged in performing their duties. We request that health care providers and staff engaged in providing medical care and related services be added to this list.

Escalating second-degree assault to a felony charge when committed against a health care worker will more comprehensively prevent and address the incidents that occur within medical facilities. Retaining the rest of HB 1308 as drafted will be useful in preventing and addressing violent incidents that occur within medical facilities against other individuals, which are also disruptive to care.

For these reasons, University of Maryland Faculty Physicians, Inc. and University of Maryland School of Medicine support HB 1308 with the above amendment.

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