



House Judiciary Committee

March 11, 2025

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

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (MDACEP), which represents the interests of emergency physicians and their patients throughout Maryland, supports House Bill 1308.

Workplace violence is a significant public health problem that is preventable. Optimal patient care can only be achieved when patients, health care workers, and all other individuals in the emergency department (ED) are protected against violent acts. In 2022, the national ACEP conducted a poll of emergency physicians. The poll clearly demonstrated that violence in the ED is on the rise and is a major contributor to healthcare worker burnout and negatively impacts patient care. Specifically,

- Eighty-five percent of emergency physicians believe the rate of violence experienced in EDs has increased over the past five years, with 45% indicating it has greatly increased.
- Two-thirds of emergency physicians report being assaulted, while more than one-third of respondents say they have been attacked more than once.
- One-third of emergency physicians who were assaulted suffered an injury, an increase of 6% since 2018.
- The number of emergency physicians who missed part of or their entire shift has increased by 50% since 2018.
- According to emergency physicians, the lack of punitive consequences has become a larger factor in the rise of violence since 2018.
- Nearly nine in ten emergency physicians agree violence in the ED harms patient care (89%), a 12-percent increase from 2018.
- Violence in EDs is exacerbating the already high rates of healthcare worker burnout and impacting their mental health.
- Emergency physicians and their care teams deserve a support system that prevents and protects these incidents when they occur.

Pursuing criminal prosecution, when deemed appropriate, against those individuals who threaten and commit violent acts against health care workers is necessary to protect the integrity of the health care system and ensure that individuals will continue to work in these environments and begin to stem the tide of our current workforce shortage. We respectfully request a favorable vote on House Bill 1308.

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