

To: Maryland House Judiciary Committee  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Date: March 11, 2025

Re: HB 1308 Crime of Violence – Medical Facilities and Places of Worship – Penalty (Sacred Places Safety Act) - **FAVORABLE** oral and written testimony

Good afternoon, Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Committee members.

My name is Caroline Doyle, and I am testifying on behalf of myself, a Maryland Emergency Nurse, in favor of HB 1308 Crime of Violence – Medical Facilities and Places of Worship – Penalty (Sacred Places Safety Act).

When I was a little girl, I was taught that places of worship and medical facilities, particularly hospitals were sacred places. They were havens and safe places for those seeking spiritual and medical help free of violence. When I was 15 years old, I entered into healthcare as a candy stripper. I remember people coming into the hospital dressed in their Sunday best and with respect for the sacred place that it was. People were respectful and peaceful within the hospital setting.

Over the past 43 years in healthcare, 34 years of me being an Emergency Department nurse, I have witnessed firsthand the increased violence that is so prevalent in our society that has spilled over into our hospitals and medical facilities. Violence in medical facilities has become a commonplace occurrence. We have all seen and heard about the recent events in Pennsylvania and Florida in the media. What we haven't heard are the countless stories of healthcare workers being verbally and physically assaulted while providing or attempting to provide care to our patients on a daily basis or patients that are assaulted by other patients. So many stories don't make it into the headlines!

I realize that patients presenting to our Emergency Departments are usually coming in on their worst days. All of our healthcare workers are there ready and willing to provide the care that our patients and families need. We can understand the concerns and frustrations of patients, family members and loved ones in emergency and crisis situations. What we cannot understand nor accept is the violence that has become too prevalent in our medical facilities! This violence not only endangers the safety of healthcare workers but patients and visitors as well. It interferes with patient care and can cause detrimental delays. I don't think any of us can or should accept this! We need to say enough is enough and we will have zero tolerance to violent behavior. HB 1308 would reestablish respect for this sacred place.

I would like to thank the sponsors for this commonsense bill that supports **ZERO TOLERANCE** for violence in medical facilities and places of worship, establishing them as "sacred places." Thank you in advance for a favorable bipartisan review.

Respectfully,

*Caroline L. Doyle*

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