

BENJAMIN BROOKS
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 303
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3606 · 301-858-3606
800-492-7122 Ext. 3606
Benjamin.Brooks@senate.state.md.us

District Office
Windsor Mill Office
8419 Liberty Road, Suite B
Windsor Mill, Maryland 21244
410-496-4037

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 902
General Assembly – Home Security System Expenses – Campaign Funds and Reimbursements

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
February 25, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 902, Home Security Systems Expenses – Campaign Funds and Reimbursement. The purpose of this bill is to allow members of the General Assembly to use up to \$1,000 in campaign funds to cover home security expenses at their primary residence and to reimburse members who pay out of pocket for these expenses, up to \$1,000 per term of office, in accordance with existing campaign finance and General Assembly reimbursement rules.

Elected officials in Maryland, and across the country, are facing a growing number of threats and harassment tied directly to their public service. These risks often extend beyond the individual officeholder to their family and loved ones. According to a recent report, more than 40 percent of state legislators report experiencing threats or attacks in recent years¹. Last year, the Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives, Melissa Hortman, and her husband, were brutally murdered in their home, and a member of the Minnesota Senate and his wife were attacked by the same gunman but fortunately survived.

Federal law allows federal candidates for office to use campaign funds for security, and Members of Congress are given a monthly stipend to use for security for their homes and families. These laws do not cover state lawmakers who face many of the same threats. Under current Maryland law, expenditures for security systems, alarm monitoring, and related protective measures can be interpreted as prohibited personal use. This discourages lawmakers from taking reasonable steps to protect themselves and their families or forces them to absorb security costs personally, even when those risks exist solely because of their public role.

Five states explicitly allow candidates and officeholders to use campaign funds for security and alarm system expenses for themselves and immediate family members (California, Louisiana, Minnesota and recently Illinois and South Dakota). Maryland must provide the same practical protection to members of the General Assembly, ensuring fairness and alignment with national practices.

¹ Brennan Center for Justice, *Intimidation of State and Local Officeholders: The Threat to Democracy* (Jan. 25, 2024)

SB 902 is a commonsense measure that balances personal safety with public accountability. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a **favorable report** on SB 902.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks".

Benjamin Brooks