

SB902_BBrooks.pdf

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV

BENJAMIN BROOKS
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



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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

ADT Testimony SB 902.pdf

Uploaded by: Holly Borgmann

Position: FAV



Holly Borgmann
Vice President, Government Affairs
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**ADT Security Services' Testimony
Before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Holly Borgmann
Vice President, Government Affairs
ADT Security Services
February 25, 2026**

Chairman Feldman and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Holly Borgmann, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs for ADT Security Services.

With nearly 150 years of industry experience, ADT is the leading provider of residential and small business security services in the United States. On behalf of our more than 13,000 employees who help save lives for a living, I would like Senator Brooks for bringing this bill forward, and to thank you for this opportunity to offer our strong support for Senate Bill 902, a common-sense bill that would allow Maryland General Assembly members to better protect themselves from threats that may arise as a result of their candidacy or elected office.

One need only pick up a newspaper to see that threats against elected officials are on the rise. I would venture a guess that some in this very building have been on the receiving end of threats and harassment. The Brennan Center for Justice reports that more than 40 percent of state legislators nationwide have experienced threats or attacks in recent years. And just last month, the US Capitol Police reported that they saw a 50% increase in threats in 2025 to Members of Congress, their staff, and the Capitol building over the prior year.

The concern for safety among public officials has only grown after the horrific murders of Minnesota Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband, the attempted murder of a member of the Minnesota Senate and his wife, and the assassination of national political commentator Charlie Kirk.

Too often, I receive calls from elected officials who have been threatened and need security assistance. Every single time, I hear from the person on the other end of the phone, "It's not myself that I'm worried about - it's my family." These threats are happening in red and blue states and are directed at members of both parties – whether made directly in the form of a phone call or email, or indirectly in the form of "pizza doxxing," where a pizza is sent to a candidate's home to show that the person making the threat knows where the person lives and can get to them.

A number of states already allow the use of campaign funds for security expenses, including California, Louisiana, Minnesota, and most recently, Illinois and South Dakota, and Members of Congress are given \$20,000 per month for security. The Federal Election Commission recently voted to allow federal candidates to use campaign funds to pay for security. By passing this legislation, Maryland would be aligning with a growing recognition that elected official safety is a real concern.

No security system is failsafe, but recent advances in technology allow residents to check surveillance cameras when they hear an unexpected noise, or to talk through a video doorbell instead of opening a door to a stranger. Video clips can be preserved or sent to law enforcement for investigation, and homes can be monitored when the candidate is away.

Regardless of political beliefs, no one should have to choose between the safety of their family and their right to engage in the political process. If committed Marylanders are driven out of politics by fear, we will all miss out on the unique perspectives they could have brought to the table. Senate Bill 902 will help public servants protect themselves and their families while working to represent their communities in the public policy arena.

On behalf of ADT, I thank you for your consideration and ask for a favorable vote for SB 902. Thank you for your time and consideration.

ESA_MD_SB902_Written_Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Taylor Criddle

Position: FAV

February 23, 2026

Written Testimony on SB 902
Submitted by the Electronic Security Association

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Electronic Security Association, which represents licensed electronic security and life safety providers in Maryland and nationwide, we respectfully urge your support for Senate Bill 902, the Safeguarding Election Candidates Using Reasonable Expenditures Act.

Threats directed at candidates and public officials have increased in recent years, often extending beyond the individual to their families and residences. At the same time, uncertainty in current law regarding the use of campaign funds for security related expenses can create confusion and discourage preventative action.

SB 902 provides needed clarity by confirming that candidates and officeholders may use campaign funds for reasonable security related expenses when those needs arise from public service. Covered measures include professionally designed, installed, and monitored security systems.

The legislation is carefully structured to operate within Maryland's existing campaign finance and transparency framework. It preserves reporting requirements and ethics safeguards while offering clear compliance guidance.

Allowing reasonable, preventative security measures under defined standards supports both personal safety and public confidence. SB 902 strikes an appropriate balance between transparency and protection.

For these reasons, ESA respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 902.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor Criddle
Vice President of Advocacy and Public Affairs
Electronic Security Association
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2026 SB0902 Testimony Against 2026-02-25.pdf

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

Testimony Against SB0902

Honorable Senators

Please enter an unfavorable decision about SB0902.

I am opposed to

- Authorizing a campaign finance entity of a member of the General Assembly, under certain circumstances, to make a disbursement from a campaign account to reimburse the member for certain expenses related to a home security system used at the member's primary place of residence; and
- authorizing a member of the General Assembly who expends personal funds on certain expenses related to a home security system used at the member's primary place of residence to be reimbursed by the General Assembly.

It is bad enough that this bill would allow candidates to use supporter donations that were given for campaign expenses to use them for a personal home security system. What is worse is that this bill would allow all the members of the general assembly to obtain a home security system and obtain reimbursement courtesy of the tax payers.

This bill is an outrage to the already overburdened residents of Maryland, especially after all the tax and fee increases you passed last session..

Please enter an unfavorable decision about SB0902.

Alan Lang
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February 23, 2026

SB 902_HB 978_ General Assembly - Home Security S

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

SB 902/HB 978: General Assembly - Home Security System Expenses - Campaign Funds and Reimbursement: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Education, Energy & the Environment Committee and Economic Matters Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE SB 902/HB 978**, *General Assembly - Home Security System Expenses - Campaign Funds and Reimbursement*.

Campaign donations are intended to support legitimate election-related activities, constituent outreach, and public advocacy—not to subsidize personal home improvements or security upgrades for elected officials. **Permitting the use of these funds for private residential expenses blurs the line between campaign finances and personal benefit, eroding public trust in our political process and potentially inviting abuse.**

Similarly, allowing state reimbursement for personal home security systems treats legislators' private residences as public expenses, which is inappropriate. Maryland taxpayers should not foot the bill for individual officials' home security, especially when many constituents face their own safety and financial challenges without such perks. Existing security measures for legislators (such as those provided through state resources when threats are credible and documented) already address legitimate concerns tied to public service—without dipping into campaign accounts or general funds for routine home installations.

This bill sets a troubling precedent that could expand to other personal expenses, further disconnecting elected officials from the everyday realities of Marylanders. We need stricter safeguards on campaign finance use and greater accountability, not new loopholes for personal enrichment.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against SB 902/HB 978** and oppose any measures that allow campaign or state funds to cover legislators' personal home security expenses.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration to this matter and for representing the interests of your constituents.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals