

SB 676: Criminal Law - **Threat of Mass Violence - Penalty:** Please vote to **SUPPORT** this bill.

Dear Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **SUPPORT** Senate Bill 676 during the upcoming hearing in the Judicial Proceedings Committee on March 3, 2026.

SB 676 would reclassify the crime of making a threat of mass violence—knowingly threatening to commit or cause a crime of violence that endangers five or more people with substantial risk of death or serious injury—from a misdemeanor to a felony. This change applies to threats made orally, in writing, or electronically, and maintains appropriate penalties (up to 10 years imprisonment and/or a \$10,000 fine) while recognizing the gravity of such acts.

Threats of mass violence, even if not carried out, create widespread terror, divert law enforcement resources for investigations and responses, and can traumatize communities, schools, workplaces, and public spaces. Treating these as misdemeanors under current law often fails to reflect their serious impact or deter potential offenders adequately. Elevating the offense to a felony sends a clear message that credible threats to cause mass harm will face proportionate consequences, strengthens prosecutors' tools, and better protects public safety—especially in an era of increasing school shootings, active shooter incidents, and online radicalization.

This targeted reform does not infringe on free speech (as it requires a knowing threat of violence) but ensures accountability for those who exploit fear on a large scale. Maryland families, students, and communities deserve laws that prioritize prevention and deterrence of mass violence threats.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote in favor of SB 676** and help make our state safer by treating threats of mass violence as the serious felony they are.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical public safety legislation.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals