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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB47: Commission Extension
Finance Committee
Hearing: January 30, 2020, 2:00 PM

Since its formation in 2018, the Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) Commission has made Maryland a national leader in emergency response systems. Last year, the Commission's 23 recommendations were incorporated into three new laws. They focused on funding, oversight, accountability, technology, and staffing. Despite the Commission's accomplishments, there is much work yet to be done.

For the 2020 Session, the Commission made 25 recommendations which including:

- Shifting audit responsibility to the Comptroller's office to guarantee that 9-1-1 fees are collected and remitted accurately;
- Recognizing the need for continuing education and occupational wellness for 9-1-1 Specialists;
- Renaming the Emergency Number Systems Board (ENSB) and modifying its membership;
- Requiring transparency for the public portion of the ENSB's meetings;
- Increasing penalties for 9-1-1 misuse; and,
- Protecting the privacy rights of callers/victims as NG911 enables people to send photos and videos to 9-1-1.

Under current law, the Commission will be terminated as of June 30, 2020. Upgrading Maryland's emergency response systems to Next Generation 9-1-1 will not happen overnight. The Commission needs to oversee the implementation of NG911 and address any unforeseen complications.

The NG911 Commission's members--comprised of experts from 9-1-1, government, industry, and technology-- have voted to continue our work. SB47 would extend the Commission for an additional two years. This will ensure that members can convene, consider, and recommend initiatives to establish and maintain the interoperability and interconnectivity that will help save lives.

I urge the Committee to favorably report Senate Bill 47.