



# Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

## Maryland Sheriffs' Association



### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chairman and  
Members of the Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** Chief David Morris, Co-Chair, MCPA, Joint Legislative Committee  
Sheriff Darren Popkin, Co-Chair, MSA, Joint Legislative Committee  
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

**DATE:** February 2, 2021

**RE:** **HB 425 - Criminal Law – Crimes Involving Computers**

**POSITION:** **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT** HB 425. This bill provides additional protections for health care facilities and public schools with respect to ransomware.

The current law makes it a crime to access another's computer system or copy or attempt to possess the content of a database without authorization of the owner. The current law also prevents a person from causing the malfunction or interruption of the operations of a computer system and certain unauthorized actions involving another's computer system. The current law also prohibits taking those actions against the State government and quasi-public entities with the intent to interfere with their functions.

Recent events have shown that there is a need to extend those protections to health care facilities and public schools by also making it a crime to interfere with their functions by corrupting their computer systems. Recently hospitals and public school systems have become the victims of malicious actors seriously interfering with operation of a large school system and the education of children and impeding hospitals from providing health care and schools teaching students. Such criminals may have different motives for their actions but clearly one is financial gain by holding their victim's hostage unless they pay large sums of money to regain access to their computer systems and records. This bill also addresses the use of ransomware for profit and by making it a crime to possess ransomware with the intent of introducing it into a computer system without authorization of the owner punishable by 3 years imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine. As a further deterrent, the bill establishes a civil action for violations of the ransomware sections.

For these reasons MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT** HB 425 and urge a **FAVORABLE** committee report.