

Support SB0374

Last year in Wheaton volunteer and career EMTs, paramedics and firefighters responded to over 10,000 calls for service. Our one hundred plus volunteers provided nearly 80,000 hours of service while responding to fires, car crashes, assaults, cardiac arrests, overdoses, births and the occasional cat stuck in a tree. It is dangerous work. We get sick and injured both physically and mentally, and the work places enormous strain on our families. No matter how difficult the burden, the 911 calls keep coming, and we can't let our community down.

Keeping our ambulances and trucks staffed is a matter of life and death. Every volunteer that gets licensed by the Maryland EMS Board fills a critical position in the field.

SB0374 and HB 380 will allow us to immediately increase our staffing by one person and more in the future. Amending Maryland law is an extreme length to go to put just one more EMT on an ambulance in Wheaton, but this reflects the **urgency** of our need. Again, the 911 calls don't stop coming just because red-tape is standing in the way.

I applaud you for working together to remove this barrier. You will help people in Wheaton and throughout Maryland.

Thank you.

Gamunu Wijetunge
Firefighter/Paramedic
Past President, Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad