



House Bill 631

Criminal Law - Threats Against State or Local Official - Penalties

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judiciary Committee

Date: February 10, 2026

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 631. This bill strengthens the penalties for threats against local elected officials. These changes have the potential to deter harmful actions that both endanger public servants and discourage public participation in leadership roles.

MACo has prioritized the well-being of public-facing civil servants for years, especially during and well after the COVID-19 pandemic. No frontline civil servant should be subject to a work environment made even more difficult due to threats and harassment. More so lately, elected officials have found themselves under assault, with tragic events unfolding in Maryland and beyond. These incidents have resulted in grave harm and the loss of life for public officials carrying out the responsibilities required of them by law.

The fear and apprehension this creates stands to have a devastating impact on public participation, with some unelected roles already seeing a decline in interested candidates such as election officials, code enforcement, public health, and the like. Enhanced penalties in the criminal law article send a message that these behaviors and any further escalation will not be tolerated. Consequences that recognize the severity of these offenses, like those outlined in HB 631, can deter life threatening assaults and indicate to local elected officials that the law has their protection and safety accordingly ensured.

This bill both protects and reaffirms the importance of our civil servants, who, in turn, protect both our well-being and democratic principles. For this reason, MACo **SUPPORTS** HB 631 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.