



Odette Ramos

Baltimore City Councilwoman

District 14

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September 16, 2025

Updated Testimony
25-0018 Emergency Scene – Unauthorized Persons Prohibited
SUPPORT with Amendments

Chair Conway and Members of the Public Safety Committee:

I am writing to request your support for 25-0018 Emergency Scene – Unauthorized Persons Prohibited. This testimony outlines the purpose of the bill and the summary of the amendments.

This legislation would require the Fire Chief or their designee on a scene of an emergency to create an established scene with caution tape, or some other type of barricade. The bill also outlines who will be authorized to go within the tape to assist with the emergency. The list includes all first responders, any city employee with a city ID, the survivors of the emergency and their families.

This legislation is not targeted toward one industry or individual. While I approached the legislation because of experiences with contractors soliciting services at emergency scenes, this legislation does not mention them at all. This legislation is about safety of everyone and allowing first responders to do their jobs effectively. 25-0018 simply establishes a fire scene so that the Fire Chief or his designee can prohibit these companies and anyone else that is not authorized from entering the scene. It helps our first responders keep everyone safe and allows them to do their jobs without having to worry about others.

This bill does not prohibit these contracting companies from talking with the residents. It simply allows for residents to have time to talk with their insurance companies, DHCD, Red Cross and their elected representatives to help recover from the immediate trauma of saving themselves and their families from a fire or disaster. It also helps the survivor have the time to get all of the information they need to make the decisions about what is next in their recovery.

We worked with the Fire Department and the Mayor's Office on the amendments. The amendments are summarized below:

- We replaced "caution tape" with "barricade" to allow the Fire Department to put whatever type of barricade is needed.
- Added language that allows the Chief to keep the barricade up after the investigation if a public safety hazard still exists.
- We took out the Red Cross specifically, and added language to show any nonprofit volunteer organization who helps people is allowed in the emergency scene.
- We combined the language about EMS and Fire personnel to be "members of the Baltimore City Fire Department"

- We made the enactment date immediately upon signing of this bill.
- On the penalties, we made the language consistent with what is done if someone crosses the barricades the police put up in similar situations. In this case, there is no state or city statute that is specific to crossing the police barricade, but in speaking with BPD, they use penalties under Disorderly Conduct or Disobeying an Officer, which is misdemeanor and jail time up to 60 days, or \$500 fine or both. (the previous language had 90 days in jail and a fine).

This bill will provide the Fire Department what they need to ensure that each resident and first responders are safe during a major emergency or disaster.

Thank you for your support.

Please contact me on 410-396-4814 or odette.amos@baltimorecity.gov if you have any questions or concerns.

In Service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Odette', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Odette Ramos
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