



Odette Ramos

Baltimore City Councilwoman

District 14

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100 N. Holliday Street, Room 553

Baltimore MD 21202

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Testimony
25-0018 Emergency Scene – Unauthorized Persons Prohibited
SUPPORT

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 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 situation. The list includes all first responders, any city employee with a city ID, the survivors of the emergency and their families.

I attend as many of my fires and emergencies in my district as I can, because I want to be available to assist our first responders and the survivors as needed. During the many emergencies I have attended, there are always at least two companies who are soliciting their services to board up or help the family address the immediate aftermath of the emergency. In every situation, contracts and business cards are shoved into the faces of the survivors, who have just gone through the trauma of removing themselves and their loved ones from the fire. They are always there before I get there, and are always insistent that the victim sign with them. At the Keswick fire, I was holding one of my constituents in my arms as she wept from the stress of just barely getting out of her burning home, when someone tapped her on the shoulder and gave her a contract to consider for services. While she was sobbing. This kind of solicitation is intolerable, and this bill will prohibit that behavior.

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 anyone else.

This bill does not prohibit these 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 in order 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.

You will hear from constituents with experiences regarding these companies. We do not have a definition for them, because they are not regulated yet. I am working with Delegate Amprey on his bill to do just that. It just barely missed being passed in the General Assembly this past year.

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

Thank you for your support.

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

In Service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Odette", written in a cursive style.

Odette Ramos
Baltimore City Councilwoman, District 14