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Joint Audit Committee  
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

August 25, 2022

General President Edward A. Kelly  
International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)  
1750 New York Avenue, NW Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20006-5395  
BY EMAIL & SNAIL MAIL

Dear President Kelly:

I was astonished to learn from a reporter that the IAFF had unanimously censured me earlier this month at its annual convention in Ottawa, Canada.

As you may know, I have dedicated the past seven years to modernizing (and funding) emergency response systems in Maryland. After three people died in my district when 9-1-1 failed, I established and chaired the statewide Commission to Advance Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) Across Maryland. Our work and the 12 laws I sponsored and enacted catapulted Maryland to the forefront nationally related to NG911. In 2018, I received the [Government Leader Award](#) from the national Next Generation 9-1-1 Institute. In both 2019 AND 2020, I was presented with the Senator William H. Amoss Memorial [Legislator of the Year Award](#) by the Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA).

The IAFF's censure is a petty, personal vendetta by one local leader. Jeff Buddle's [complaint](#) cites [HB1381](#), a bill heard by the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs (EHEA) Committee on March 30, 2022. I was presenting my own public safety bill, [SB372](#), in the House that afternoon and missed the hearing. The first (and only) time Buddle emailed me about HB1381 was Friday, April 8-- just before the General Assembly adjourned on the 11th. As our 90-day session winds down, even good legislation dies. This year, 48 bills (including HB1381) that had passed the House died in EHEA.

In addition to being an ally and leader on behalf of public safety personnel (including seeking Workers' Compensation for our courageous 9-1-1 Specialists!), I have long been a friend to organized labor. To dredge up an issue that was before the Montgomery County Council in 2016-- *six years ago*-- is further evidence of Buddle's bizarre over-reach to try to embarrass me. In my eight years in the House and eight years in the Senate, I have partnered with my Council colleagues, but I have virtually never instructed them as to particular legislation. Comparatively, the other elected officials censured at this year's IAFF convention-- including Maryland's embarrassing Congressman Andy Harris (R- MD1)-- engaged in recent, repeated, and egregious actions.

A few friends and colleagues who [saw the press story](#) and contacted me suggested that the real motivation for the IAFF's action was my effort to persuade the Maryland State FireMEN's Association to join [44 other states](#) in renaming itself with the gender-neutral FireFIGHTER's title. MSFA should change this outdated

and inaccurate name to reflect the courageous service of all firefighters-- regardless of gender. I can't imagine that the IAFF would want to be perceived as endorsing the "Traditionalists" (aka the sexists).

It is surprising and disappointing that not one person on either the staff or the Board of the IAFF took five minutes to research my legislative and political record of support for working families and the public safety community. If you had, perhaps you would have chosen to send me a letter of commendation rather than condemnation.

My dedication to the health and well-being of Maryland's firefighters-- career and volunteers-- has never wavered. But I do question the wisdom of IAFF's taking this step now, as I anticipate four more years in leadership in the Maryland Senate. I look forward to a letter of reply not later than September 8.

Sincerely,

***Cheryl***

Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair  
Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee  
District 17