



## *Internal Memorandum*

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**SUBJECT – Testimony for Council Bill No. 12-2019**

**Date:** April 9, 2019

**To:** Lonnie R. Robbins  
Chief Administrative Officer

**From:** Christine Uhlhorn, Chief  
Department of Fire and Rescue Services

Council Bill No. 12-2019 repeals the Fire and Rescue Services Board and removes references to the Board from the County Code. The Board was originated in 1968 by House Bill 538, prior to the implementation of Charter Government. The Board was formed to advise and consult the County Commissioners from time to time on matters of concerning the administration of fire suppression, fire prevention, fire training, arson investigation, and fire communications activities. Membership is primarily made of names submitted by the 6 Volunteer Corporations as identified in section 17.103. As many things in Howard County, Fire and EMS service has evolved immensely since the inception of the Fire Board. In fact, DFRS was not established until 1971 under the first Fire Administrator Paul F.J LePore. During this same time period the 29 career employees assigned to the volunteer departments were transferred to Howard County and classified as public safety employees. The number of incidents handled by the six volunteer corporations collectively was 4,487 incidents. The census population from 1970 was 61,911. In comparison to today, there are nearly 500 uniformed employees of DFRS, an estimated population of over 320,000, and a call volume of 35,061.

The last recorded meeting of the Fire Board was April of 2009. Today, DFRS Leadership routinely meets with the Board of The Howard County Volunteer Firefighters Association (HCVFA), the individual leadership of the six Volunteer Corporations, along with attending bi-monthly meetings of the HCVFA. DFRS Leadership believes the Fire Board has become obsolete and no longer has a functional purpose and should therefore be disbanded.

CB 12 has no fiscal impact to the County.