AN ACT requiring that all multiple-line telephone systems allow for the direct dial of 9-1-1; defining certain terms; authorizing certain inspections; providing for certain civil penalties; and generally relating to Telephone Access to the County’s 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone System.
WHEREAS, Howard County strives to protect the health and safety of County residents and
visitors to the County and recognizes that “911” is the United States' universal emergency
assistance line; and

WHEREAS, many telephone systems for hotels, motels, schools and businesses require that a
user dial an additional number to obtain an outside line; and

WHEREAS, persons unfamiliar with such a telephone system will be unable to reach
emergency services in a crisis, which can lead to disastrous results; and

WHEREAS, on December 1, 2013, Kari Hunt was fatally attacked in a Texas hotel by her
estranged husband and, while Kari's nine-year-old daughter tried calling 9-1-1 during the
struggle, her daughter was unable to make a connection because she did not realize she
needed to first dial 9 for an outside line; and

WHEREAS, tragic stories like Kari's illustrate the necessity of having multi-line telephone
systems that directly dial 911 without delay or the necessity of dialing another number;
and

WHEREAS, experts on multi-line telephone systems state that direct-dial 9-1-1 service can be
provided in most systems through updating of software; and

WHEREAS, Howard County shall take steps to ensure that any multiple-line telephone system
that is accessible to the general public must allow for direct dialing of 9-1-1 to protect the
health and safety of all parties; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland General Assembly has amended Section 1-314 of the Public Safety
Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to ensure that local jurisdictions enforce the
requirement.
Section 1. Be It Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland, that the Howard County Code is amended as follows:
By adding:

Title 17. Public Protection Services.
Subtitle 13. Telephone access to the County's 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone System.

Title 17. Public Protection Services.
Subtitle 13. Telephone Access to the County’s 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone System.

SECTION 17.1300. PURPOSE; APPLICABILITY.
(A) PURPOSE. IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE, THE PURPOSE OF THIS SUBTITLE IS TO ENSURE THAT ANY PERSON USING A MULTIPLE-LINE TELEPHONE SYSTEM CAN DIRECT DIAL 9-1-1 WITHOUT HAVING TO DIAL ANOTHER NUMBER FIRST.
(B) APPLICABILITY. THIS SUBTITLE APPLIES TO ANY PERSON WHO INSTALLS OR OPERATES A MULTIPLE-LINE TELEPHONE SYSTEM.

SECTION 17.1301. DEFINITIONS.
In this subtitle, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:
(A) MULTIPLE-LINE TELEPHONE SYSTEM shall have the meaning set forth in Section 1-314 of the Public Safety Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and includes, without limitation, network-based and premises-based systems such as Centrex service, premises-based, hosted and cloud-based VoIP, as well as PBX, Hybrid and Key Telephone Systems, as classified by the FCC under Part 68 of its rules.
(B) PERSON shall have the meaning set forth in Section 1-101 of the Public Safety Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

SECTION 17.1302. REQUIREMENTS, AUTHORITY TO INSPECT.
(A) GENERALLY. PURSUANT TO SECTION 1-314 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE OF THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND, A PERSON WHO INSTALLS OR OPERATES A MULTIPLE-LINE TELEPHONE SYSTEM SHALL ENSURE THAT THE SYSTEM IS CONNECTED TO THE PUBLIC SWITCHED
1 TELEPHONE NETWORK IN SUCH A WAY THAT WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL USING THE SYSTEM DIALS 9-1-1,
2 THE CALL CONNECTS TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT WITHOUT REQUIRING THE USER TO
3 DIAL ANY OTHER NUMBER OR SET OF NUMBERS.
4 (B) AUTHORITY TO INSPECT. THE DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES SHALL INSPECT THE
5 INSTALLATION AND OPERATION OF A MULTIPLE-LINE TELEPHONE SYSTEM AND ENFORCE
6 COMPLIANCE WITH THIS SUBTITLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH TITLE 24 OF THE HOWARD COUNTY
7 CODE.

9 SECTION 17.1303. FINES.
10 (A) FAILURE TO COMPLY. A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SUBTITLE IS SUBJECT TO A FINE OF $100
11 FOR A FIRST OFFENSE AND A FINE OF $200 FOR A SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE. EACH DAY
12 THAT A VIOLATION EXISTS IS A SEPARATE OFFENSE.

14 Section 2. And Be It Further Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland,
15 that this Act shall become effective 61 days after its enactment.
BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been approved by the Executive and returned to the Council, stands enacted on
[Signature]
Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been passed by the yeas and nays of two-thirds of the members of the Council notwithstanding the objections of the Executive, stands enacted on [Date], 2020.

Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having received neither the approval nor the disapproval of the Executive within ten days of its presentation, stands enacted on [Date], 2020.

Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, not having been considered on final reading within the time required by Charter, stands failed for want of consideration on [Date], 2020.

Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been disapproved by the Executive and having failed on passage upon consideration by the Council stands failed on [Date], 2020.

Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, the withdrawal of which received a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Council, is withdrawn from further consideration on [Date], 2020.

Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council
DATE: October 21, 2020
FROM: Lisa Myers
Chief of Police
TO: Lonnie Robbins
Chief Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: Kari’s Law Testimony

Please accept this as my testimony in support of Council Bill 2020-XX.

As you likely know, on December 1, 2013, Kari Hunt was fatally attacked in a Texas hotel by her estranged husband. Kari’s nine-year-old daughter tried calling 911 during the struggle but was unable to make a connection because the phone system required a caller to first dial 9 for an outside line. Her tragic death lead to national legislation on direct access dialing for 911 calls.

Many telephone systems for hotels, motels, schools and businesses still require that a user dial an additional number to obtain an outside line. Persons unfamiliar with such a requirement may still be unable to reach emergency services in a crisis, which can lead to similar disastrous results.

The Howard County Police Department fully supports the required local legislation that brings us into compliance with Maryland General Assembly 2020 amendment to Section 1.314 of the Public Safety Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to ensure that local jurisdictions require direct 911 access. The Police Department is working closely with the Fire Department to launch a public awareness campaign and have existing fire code inspectors check for compliance during standard visits.

Our compliance is also mandatory to continue to receive funding from the 9-1-1 Trust Fund. In accordance with subtitle 1-309, future requests for disbursements from the fund must include a certification of appropriate actions taken by the County under Chapter 376, 2020. For reference, Howard County has received $2,835,022.41 so far, through the third quarter of fiscal year 2020.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions regarding this legislation.

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