

# HOUSE BILL 1544

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By: **Delegates Bhandari, Martinez, Pena–Melnyk, and Rosenberg**

Introduced and read first time: February 25, 2025

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Safety – Maryland Law Enforcement Public Service Medal and Key**  
3 **Bridge Collapse Victims Memorial Tribute**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Law Enforcement Public Service Medal;  
5 establishing eligibility requirements for the medal and procedures for nomination,  
6 selection, and the awarding of the medal; requiring a law enforcement agency to  
7 grant a certain promotion to a medal recipient; requiring a certain ceremony to  
8 annually honor and remember the sacrifices and contributions of certain workers;  
9 and generally relating to the Maryland Law Enforcement Public Service Medal and  
10 Key Bridge collapse victims memorial tribute.

11 BY adding to  
12 Article – Public Safety  
13 Section 3–801 and 3–802 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 8. Maryland Law  
14 Enforcement Public Service Medal”  
15 Annotated Code of Maryland  
16 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

17 Preamble

18 WHEREAS, The State of Maryland recognizes the extraordinary bravery and  
19 commitment of law enforcement officers who risk their lives to protect and serve the public;  
20 and

21 WHEREAS, Law enforcement officers often face dangerous and life–threatening  
22 situations in their duty to safeguard communities; and

23 WHEREAS, The heroic actions of Corporal Jeremy Herbert, Officer Garry Kirts,  
24 Sergeant Paul Pastorek, and Officer Timothy Baublitz during the collapse of the Francis  
25 Scott Key Bridge on March 26, 2024, demonstrated unparalleled courage and selflessness  
26 in saving lives during a tragic crisis; and

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, The Maryland General Assembly seeks to establish a formal recognition  
2 for officers who display extraordinary valor, sacrifice, and dedication to public safety; and

3 WHEREAS, The Maryland General Assembly also recognizes the tragic loss of life of  
4 the six workers who perished in the Key Bridge collapse, whose sacrifices should be  
5 memorialized; now, therefore,

6 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
7 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

8 **Article – Public Safety**

9 **SUBTITLE 8. MARYLAND LAW ENFORCEMENT PUBLIC SERVICE MEDAL.**

10 **3–801.**

11 (A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
12 INDICATED.

13 (B) “MEDAL” MEANS THE MARYLAND LAW ENFORCEMENT PUBLIC  
14 SERVICE MEDAL.

15 (C) “SECRETARY” MEANS THE SECRETARY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND  
16 CORRECTIONAL SERVICES.

17 **3–802.**

18 (A) (1) THERE IS A MARYLAND LAW ENFORCEMENT PUBLIC SERVICE  
19 MEDAL.

20 (2) THE MEDAL IS THE HIGHEST STATE HONOR AWARDED TO LAW  
21 ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS FOR EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE, VALOR, AND  
22 HEROISM.

23 (B) (1) THE GOVERNOR MAY AWARD THE MEDAL TO SWORN LAW  
24 ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IN MARYLAND WHO:

25 (I) HAVE DEMONSTRATED ACTS OF EXTRAORDINARY  
26 COURAGE, BRAVERY, OR SELFLESSNESS WHILE ON DUTY;

27 (II) HAVE RISKED OR SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES BY SAVING  
28 LIVES, PREVENTING SIGNIFICANT CRIMES, OR RESPONDING TO CRITICAL  
29 EMERGENCIES; OR

1 (III) HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTED PUBLIC SAFETY,  
2 INCLUDING RESPONDING TO DISASTERS, TERRORIST THREATS, OR SIGNIFICANT  
3 PUBLIC EMERGENCIES.

4 (2) THE GOVERNOR MAY AWARD NOT MORE THAN FOUR MEDALS PER  
5 CALENDAR YEAR.

6 (3) WHEN AN OFFICER IS AWARDED A MEDAL POSTHUMOUSLY, THE  
7 OFFICER'S NEXT OF KIN MAY RECEIVE OFFICIAL RECOGNITION AND  
8 COMMENDATION ON THE OFFICER'S BEHALF.

9 (C) (1) A MEDAL REVIEW COMMITTEE SHALL BE ESTABLISHED WITHIN  
10 THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES TO  
11 EVALUATE NOMINATIONS AND SELECT RECIPIENTS FOR THE MEDAL.

12 (2) THE MEDAL REVIEW COMMITTEE SHALL CONSIST OF:

13 (I) THE SECRETARY, WHO SHALL SERVE AS THE CHAIR OF THE  
14 COMMITTEE;

15 (II) THE SECRETARY OF STATE POLICE;

16 (III) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND POLICE  
17 TRAINING AND STANDARDS COMMISSION, CHOSEN BY THE SECRETARY;

18 (IV) ONE MEMBER OF THE SENATE OF MARYLAND, CHOSEN BY  
19 THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE;

20 (V) ONE MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, CHOSEN BY  
21 THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE; AND

22 (VI) ONE COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE WITH EXPERIENCE  
23 WORKING IN LAW ENFORCEMENT OR PUBLIC SAFETY, CHOSEN BY THE SECRETARY.

24 (3) THE COMMITTEE SHALL:

25 (I) REVIEW NOMINATIONS SUBMITTED BY:

26 1. STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES;

27 2. STATE AND LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS; AND

**3. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND CIVILIANS; AND**

**(II) ANNUALLY SUBMIT A LIST OF NOT MORE THAN FOUR RECOMMENDED AWARDEES TO THE GOVERNOR FOR FINAL APPROVAL.**

**(D) A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY SHALL GRANT A ONE-GRADE PROMOTION TO AN EMPLOYEE WHO RECEIVES A MEDAL.**

**(E) (1) THE GOVERNOR SHALL PRESENT THE MEDALS IN AN OFFICIAL STATE CEREMONY HELD ANNUALLY IN ANNAPOLIS.**

**(2) AT THE CEREMONY, EACH MEDAL RECIPIENT SHALL RECEIVE:**

**(I) A GOLD MEDALLION BEARING THE STATE SEAL;**

**(II) A CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR AND THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY; AND**

**(III) A PERMANENT MARYLAND PUBLIC SERVICE HONOR ROLL LISTING HOUSED AT THE STATE HOUSE.**

**(3) THE CEREMONY SHALL ANNUALLY HONOR AND REMEMBER THE SACRIFICES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FOLLOWING WORKERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE FRANCIS SCOTT KEY BRIDGE COLLAPSE OF 2024:**

**(I) DORLIAN RONIAL CASTILLO CABRERA;**

**(II) CARLOS DANIEL HERNANDEZ ESTRELLA;**

**(III) ALEJANDRO HERNANDEZ FUENTES;**

**(IV) MIGUEL ANGEL LUNA GONZALEZ;**

**(V) JOSE MYNOR LOPEZ; AND**

**(VI) MAYNOR YASIR SUAZO-SANDOVAL.**

**(F) MEDAL PRODUCTION AND CEREMONY EXPENSES SHALL BE FUNDED THROUGH:**

**(1) AN ANNUAL APPROPRIATION CONTAINED IN THE STATE BUDGET; AND**

1                   **(2) GRANTS, PRIVATE SPONSORSHIPS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**  
2 **FOUNDATION SUPPORT.**

3           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

4           (a)     The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services shall convene the  
5 medal review committee on or before September 1, 2025; and

6           (b)     The first annual Maryland Law Enforcement Public Service Medal ceremony  
7 shall be held on or before January 31, 2026.

8           SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
9 30, 2025.