

# HOUSE BILL 1544

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By: Delegates Bhandari, Martinez, Pena-Melnyk, ~~and Rosenberg~~ Rosenberg, Alston, Bagnall, Chisholm, Cullison, Guzzone, Hill, Hutchinson, S. Johnson, Kaiser, Kerr, Kipke, Lopez, M. Morgan, Reilly, Ross, Szeliga, Taveras, White Holland, Woods, and Woorman

Introduced and read first time: February 25, 2025

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

Re-referred to: Health and Government Operations, February 27, 2025

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 6, 2025

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

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

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



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

4 WHEREAS, Law enforcement officers often face dangerous and life-threatening  
5 situations in their duty to safeguard communities; and

6 WHEREAS, The heroic actions of ~~Corporal Jeremy Herbert, Officer Garry Kirts,~~  
7 ~~Sergeant Paul Pastorek, and Officer Timothy Baublitz~~ Sergeant Paul Pastorek, Corporal  
8 Jeremy Herbert, Senior Officer William Kinsey, Officer Timothy Baublitz, and Officer  
9 Garry Kirts during the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge on March 26, 2024,  
10 demonstrated unparalleled courage and selflessness in saving lives during a tragic crisis;  
11 and

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

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

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

19 **Article – Public Safety**

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

21 **3–801.**

22 (A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
23 INDICATED.

24 (B) “MEDAL” MEANS THE MARYLAND LAW ENFORCEMENT PUBLIC  
25 SERVICE MEDAL.

26 (C) “SECRETARY” MEANS THE SECRETARY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND  
27 CORRECTIONAL SERVICES.

28 **3–802.**

29 (A) (1) THERE IS A MARYLAND LAW ENFORCEMENT PUBLIC SERVICE  
30 MEDAL.

1           **(2) THE MEDAL IS THE HIGHEST STATE HONOR AWARDED TO LAW**  
2 **ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS FOR EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE, VALOR, AND**  
3 **HEROISM.**

4           **(B) (1) THE GOVERNOR MAY AWARD THE MEDAL TO SWORN LAW**  
5 **ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IN MARYLAND WHO:**

6                   **(I) HAVE DEMONSTRATED ACTS OF EXTRAORDINARY**  
7 **COURAGE, BRAVERY, OR SELFLESSNESS WHILE ON DUTY;**

8                   **(II) HAVE RISKED OR SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES BY SAVING**  
9 **LIVES, PREVENTING SIGNIFICANT CRIMES, OR RESPONDING TO CRITICAL**  
10 **EMERGENCIES; OR**

11                   **(III) HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTED PUBLIC SAFETY,**  
12 **INCLUDING RESPONDING TO DISASTERS, TERRORIST THREATS, OR SIGNIFICANT**  
13 **PUBLIC EMERGENCIES.**

14           **(2) THE GOVERNOR MAY AWARD NOT MORE THAN ~~FOUR~~ FIVE MEDALS**  
15 **PER CALENDAR YEAR.**

16           **(3) WHEN AN OFFICER IS AWARDED A MEDAL POSTHUMOUSLY, THE**  
17 **OFFICER'S NEXT OF KIN MAY RECEIVE OFFICIAL RECOGNITION AND**  
18 **COMMENDATION ON THE OFFICER'S BEHALF.**

19           **(C) (1) A MEDAL REVIEW COMMITTEE SHALL BE ESTABLISHED WITHIN**  
20 **THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES TO**  
21 **EVALUATE NOMINATIONS AND SELECT RECIPIENTS FOR THE MEDAL.**

22           **(2) THE MEDAL REVIEW COMMITTEE SHALL CONSIST OF:**

23                   **(I) THE SECRETARY, WHO SHALL SERVE AS THE CHAIR OF THE**  
24 **COMMITTEE;**

25                   **(II) THE SECRETARY OF STATE POLICE;**

26                   **(III) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND POLICE**  
27 **TRAINING AND STANDARDS COMMISSION, CHOSEN BY THE SECRETARY;**

28                   **(IV) ONE MEMBER OF THE SENATE OF MARYLAND, CHOSEN BY**  
29 **THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE;**

30                   **(V) ONE MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, CHOSEN BY**  
31 **THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE; AND**

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

3 (3) THE COMMITTEE SHALL:

4 (I) REVIEW NOMINATIONS SUBMITTED BY:

- 5 1. STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES;
- 6 2. STATE AND LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS; AND
- 7 3. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND CIVILIANS; AND

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

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

12 ~~(E)~~ (D) (1) THE GOVERNOR SHALL PRESENT THE MEDALS IN AN  
13 OFFICIAL STATE CEREMONY HELD ANNUALLY IN ANNAPOLIS.

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

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

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

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

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

23 (I) DORLIAN RONIAL CASTILLO CABRERA;

24 (II) CARLOS DANIEL HERNANDEZ ESTRELLA;

25 (III) ALEJANDRO HERNANDEZ FUENTES;

26 (IV) MIGUEL ANGEL LUNA GONZALEZ;

1 (V) JOSE MYNOR LOPEZ; AND

2 (VI) MAYNOR YASIR SUAZO-SANDOVAL.

3 ~~(F)~~ (E) MEDAL PRODUCTION AND CEREMONY EXPENSES SHALL BE  
4 FUNDED THROUGH:

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

7 (2) GRANTS, PRIVATE SPONSORSHIPS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT  
8 FOUNDATION SUPPORT.

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

10 (a) The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services shall convene the  
11 medal review committee on or before September 1, 2025, ~~and~~.

12 (b) (1) The first annual Maryland Law Enforcement Public Service Medal  
13 ceremony shall be held on ~~or before January 31, 2026~~ March 26, 2026.

14 (2) The following individuals shall be awarded the Maryland Law  
15 Enforcement Public Service Medal at the ceremony held in accordance with paragraph (1)  
16 of this subsection in recognition of contributions made during the collapse of the Francis  
17 Scott Key Bridge:

18 (i) Sergeant Paul Pastorek;

19 (ii) Corporal Jeremy Herbert;

20 (iii) Senior Officer William Kinsey;

21 (iv) Officer Timothy Baublitz; and

22 (v) Officer Garry Kirts.

23 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
24 30, 2025.