



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr. Chairman and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Chief David Morris, Co-Chair, MCPA, Joint Legislative Committee
Sheriff Darren Popkin, Co-Chair, MSA, Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 21, 2020

RE: SB 497 Drugged Driving - Controlled Dangerous Substance Testing - Authorized
Police Officers

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) SUPPORT SB 497. This bill would greatly increase the ability of police officers to request and obtain evidence of impaired driving.

Under current law, only a certified Drug Recognition Expert ("DRE") may request a blood sample from a driver suspected of driving while impaired by drugs or a controlled dangerous substance. To become a DRE, officers must undergo extensive and lengthy training. The training allows a DRE to provide expert opinion testimony in court about a driver's impairment. Many agencies are not able to have a DRE available to assist in a traffic stop where a driver is suspected of being impaired. Without a DRE, officers are not able to ask for, or obtain, a blood sample to determine a driver's impairment, even when there are clearly reasonable grounds to do so.

SB 497 allows an officer who has successfully completed the Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement ("ARIDE") course to ask for or direct the taking of a blood sample when the officer has reasonable grounds to believe the driver is impaired by drugs or a controlled dangerous substance. The ARIDE program consists of a minimum of 16 hours of specialized training and field work which ensures that the decision to obtain a sample is made by qualified officers. Because ARIDE is easier to provide than the full DRE program, SB 497 will make it far easier for police to request or obtain a sample. SB 497 will greatly promote the safety of all Marylanders.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA SUPPORT SB 497 and urge a FAVORABLE Committee report.