



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger Chairman and
Members of the Judiciary 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 25, 2020

RE: **HB 736 – Police Officers – Mental Health – Employee Assistance Programs**

POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT HB 736 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill requires all law enforcement agencies to develop and implement an employee assistance program for all police officers that the agency employs and provide confidential mental health services.

The amendments being proposed by Delegate Brooks further strengthen the bill by clarifying the following requirements:

- Law enforcement agencies must provide access to an Employee Assistance Program and/or mental health program for all police officers that the law enforcement agency employs.
- In addition to requirements of § 3-516 of the Public Safety Article, agencies must also provide to all officers it employs, access to confidential and voluntary mental health consultation or counseling service before the officer returns to full duty following any incident involving a serious injury to the police officer; an officer-involved shooting; an accident resulting in a fatality or any use of force resulting in a fatality or serious injury.
- Law enforcement agencies must develop a policy to provide access to the services required by the bill at minimal cost to its officers.

This legislation recognizes and honors the sacrifice of law enforcement officers. They put their lives on the line to protect and serve others experiencing trauma when arriving at crash scenes; addressing incidents of domestic violence; investigating shootings and murders; searching for lost children and vulnerable adults. If untreated, that trauma accumulates over time and can threaten the mental health and productivity of the officer.

HB 736 prioritizes the mental health of police officers and seeks to reduce the negative stigma of seeking mental services commonly experienced by members of law enforcement. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT HB 736** and urge a **FAVORABLE** report as **AMENDED**.

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