



MARLOW HEIGHTS SPECIAL POLICE

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Good Morning Distinguished Member of the Senate:

I am Chief John Scott Conklin of the Marlow Heights Special Police here to testify on behalf of Senate Bill 63. First, I would like to establish some background on the Marlow Heights Shopping Center and the Marlow Heights Special Police Department. The Marlow Heights Shopping Center was constructed in the mid to late 1950's on 33 acres in Prince George' County, consisting of 454,725 sf of retail space with approximate 60 stores plus a small Office Building component. The Special Police Department was formed in 1960 to serve the Shopping Center and the immediate surrounding Marlow Heights community. This Department as compared to the County or other Municipalities has a relatively small budget since it is funded by the Shopping Center income.

The Department is authorized through the Governor's Office under Title 3-301, under which our Officers are commissioned through the Maryland State Police and sworn in by the Secretary of State Office with the same police powers as any other State, County or Municipal Police Officer. Notwithstanding, our police powers are specific to the Marlow Heights Shopping Center and the immediate surrounding community. Our department personnel are currently required to be trained under the Maryland Police Training Commission (MPTC) to obtain the skill, knowledge and experience that a Police Officer requires.

The Captain and I are here today to seek your support for the proposed Senate Bill 63 which we believe will be vital to our continuing existence while serving the Marlow Heights community. The Bill would provide the means to modernize and further educate our personnel in this small department.

Passage of this Bill will provide this Department the following opportunities but limited to just these examples:

- 1) Establish radio communication between our Special Police Department and Prince Georges County Police. Throughout our existence we have only been authorized through Prince George's County Police to listen into their communications but not transmit directly with County dispatch or County patrol vehicles. Like any other citizen we have to either call 911 or dispatch directly if we require County Police backup or other assistance. This is a life safety issue for our small department.
- 2) Provide the capability for this Department to apply for certain grants to fund improvements for our personnel, one such example, would be portable digital police radios to communicate properly with County Police Dispatch.

- 3) Establish mutual aid agreements with neighborhoods adjacent to our Shopping Center which would provide the authority for our Department to expand protection to citizens on a somewhat wider scope. This would benefit the County Police to allocate their resources to other areas of greater need.

In concluding, I request that the Senate Bill 63 be approved thereby providing the ability to update this small Department with modern day law enforcement equipment and communications capability which will contribute to improved safety at this Shopping Center and surrounding Community.

For your consideration I have provided a copy of our General Orders and the Departments list of reported calls for the period of 2019 – 2020. I encourage you to follow up with me should you have any questions.

Thank you, members of this Senate Committee, for providing the time to hear our testimony. Appreciate your service to the State of Maryland.

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