



# City of Havre de Grace

711 PENNINGTON AVENUE, HAVRE DE GRACE, MARYLAND 21078  
WWW.HAVREDEGRACEMD.COM

410- 939-1800  
410- 575-7043

February 9, 2021

The Honorable Luke Clippinger  
Chair, Judiciary Committee  
Room 101  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: Oppose - HB 187 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Body–Worn Cameras**

Chairman Clippinger and The Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The City of Havre de Grace opposes House Bill 187. If passed, the legislation would create an unfunded mandate that could result in budgetary impacts on already stressed police department budgets, which has the potential to reduce funding allocated not only to programming and services reductions but training for law enforcement officers as well.

The City of Havre de Grace is considered one of the safest cities in the United States and does not compromise public safety. However, small municipal police departments struggle to balance budgets, and such a mandate as proposed by HB 187 will result in an additional \$50,000 annually.

The funding to comply with HB 187 will in part come from the Havre de Grace Police Departments' training line item. If the Maryland General Assembly passes HB 187, they will be responsible for putting more law enforcement officers on the street with less training.

The City of Havre de Grace suspects most large agencies will not have difficulties complying with the bill. Instead, the bill will force small municipalities in Maryland to choose between providing much-needed training and other services for law enforcement officers or complying with HB 187.

For comparison's sake, out of the 157 municipal governments in Maryland, the City of Havre de Grace is the 18th largest, with Baltimore City considered the largest.

Havre de Grace Police Department has a force of 45 sworn and civilian staff. Baltimore City Police Department has a force of 3,100 sworn and civilian staff.

The Havre de Grace Police Department has a budget of five million dollars. In comparison, Baltimore City Police Department has a budget of five hundred million dollars.

It usually would not be realistic to compare these two police departments; however, if passed, HB 187 would apply the same unfunded mandate to both police agencies. The same unfunded mandate, even though the Baltimore City PD is the 8th largest municipal police force in the United States and has a budget that is a hundred times greater than Havre de Grace PD's.

It is not realistic to ask small municipal police forces to comply with a piece of legislation that will lead them scrambling to find ways to cut their budget and reduce public safety services to simply comply with the bill.

The City of Havre de Grace urges the committee to give HB 187 an unfavorable report.