



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 17, 2021

RE: **HB 1312 COVID-19 Eviction and Housing Relief Act of 2021**

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) and the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and **OPPOSE HB 1312**. Although the purpose of the bill in its entirety is to help residential tenants who have faced economic hardship particularly as a result of COVID-19, the requirements directed to the Maryland Sheriffs are unreasonable, cost prohibitive, and put the Deputies safety at risk.

The specific requirements of HB1312 for the Sheriff's Offices of providing notice to potential persons to be evicted of the exact date in writing at least 48 hours in advance, is an officer safety concern that some tenants might choose to arm themselves or refuse access to the properties, encouraging possible confrontations. The Bill also requires the Sheriff to report eviction data monthly in a system to be created by the Department of Housing and Community Development, which would allow for automated searching, spatial analysis, visualization, and processing. Many of the Sheriffs' Offices Statewide, do not have records management systems or the existing resources to provide this data on a continual and ongoing basis without additional funding. The Bill also requires multiple posting and notification requirements, due to any type of rescheduling of the eviction. As it is not unusual for evictions to become rescheduled due to weather, landlord considerations or other factors, this duplication in services, is both resource demanding and fiscally prohibitive.

As stated earlier, although the Maryland Sheriffs understand the financial difficulties of certain tenants, especially during this challenging period of a public health crisis, the specific requirements of this bill that apply directly to the duties and responsibilities of the Sheriffs, are of significant concern. MSA and MCPA are willing to work with the sponsor on other options. However, as introduced, MSA and MCPA **OPPOSE HB 1312** and urge an **UNFAVORABLE** report.