



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

April 8, 2022
The House Appropriations Committee
SB 958 Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Crisfield Police Department
Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you, Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the distinguished Senate House Appropriations Committee for allowing me to present **958 Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Crisfield Police Department**. This legislation would allow the members of the Crisfield Police Department to participate in the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System.

Crisfield Police Chief David Dalfonso has been working with officials from the Maryland Retirement and Pension System since September 2021 after receiving approval from the Crisfield Mayor and City Council for the Police Department to apply for LEOPS with the intention of entering LEOPS in July, 2022. I publicly want to thank Ms. Anne Gawthrop, Director of Legislative Affairs at the Maryland Retirement and Pension System, for all of her guidance and assistance with this process.

During the process, Chief Dalfonso was informed that legislation was required for the Crisfield Police Department to participate in LEOPS as the City of Crisfield currently is participating in a non-contributory retirement system.

This is a local priority bill that would allow the Crisfield Police Department to retain and recruit qualified officers, and to remain competitive with neighboring law enforcement agencies and jurisdictions, during a rampant law enforcement shortage across the Shore and State of Maryland.

I have submitted written testimony on behalf of Chief Dalfonso so you can hear firsthand the challenges of the Crisfield Police Department and the need to pass SB 958 as soon as possible.

Thank you for your kind attention and consideration, and I respectfully ask for a favorable report of SB 958.

House Appropriations Committee
Room 121
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

April 8, 2022

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is David Dalfonso and I serve as the Chief of Police at the Crisfield Police Department. I am here to request a favorable report on Senate Bill 958.

Like most law enforcement agencies, the Crisfield Police Department with eleven members currently is struggling to recruit and retain qualified Police Officers. Unfortunately, the Crisfield Police Department has the added distinction of not only being the lowest paid, but also the only law enforcement agency in Somerset County that currently is not in the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS).

Since becoming Chief in 2020, one of my main goals has been to obtain LEOPS for the Officers of the Crisfield Police Department as an important tool to retain and recruit the Crisfield Police Workforce.

In September of 2021, with the approval of the Crisfield Mayor and Council, I submitted an application on behalf of the Crisfield Police Department, to the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System (MSRA) for entry into LEOPS.

In the months that followed, I followed every direction and submitted every document requested by MSRA with the intention of entering LEOPS in July of 2022.

On January 31, 2022 I was notified by the State Retirement officials that legislation would be required to allow the Crisfield Police Department to participate in the LEOPS (contributory system) given that the City of Crisfield is currently participating in a non-contributory retirement system.

I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 958 to allow the members of the Crisfield Police Department to participate in the LEOPS, an important tool for the Crisfield Police Department to retain our current members and recruit for the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

David Dalfonso

Chief of Police
Crisfield Police Department