



## Testimony for the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

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### SB 141 Pensions and Retirement – Forfeiture of Benefits – Law Enforcement Officers

#### INFORMATIONAL

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The ACLU of Maryland offers the following informational testimony on SB 141, which would establish that law enforcement officers are subject to forfeiture of benefits from the State Retirement and Pension System or a local system if they are found guilty of, plead guilty to, or enter a plea of nolo contendere to a felony, perjury or a misdemeanor relating to truthfulness and veracity committed in the course of their duties as an officer.

As an organization committed to justice and freedom, the ACLU of Maryland strongly supports due process rights and second chances. We also, however, advocate for government transparency and accountability, and we strongly prioritize policies that prevent government-sanctioned abuse. We therefore support measures that would provide greater transparency and accountability for law enforcement. More importantly, we support measures that deter police abuse in the first place.

Law enforcement officers are government employees who have difficult, demanding jobs. Officers who fairly and justly enforce public safety perform an important public service, and communities deserve and want public safety systems that protect everyone respectfully and equally. When an officer resorts to untruthfulness, it not only violates the trust placed in that officer—it undermines the community's faith in law enforcement more broadly. This jeopardizes public safety, and it hinders responsible police officers' abilities to perform their jobs. This is why we as a state need to continue striving to create meaningful police transparency and accountability. Deterring police misconduct and holding police accountable to communities therefore benefits police and community members alike.

As this body knows, dishonesty in policing allows misconduct to go unreported and therefore unaddressed. For these reasons, the ACLU of

Maryland supports efforts to root out dishonesty in policing and uncover and penalize misconduct.



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