



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Section
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: February 1, 2022

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 134 **Position:** Letter of Information

BILL TITLE: Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission –
Training Requirements – Electronic Stalking

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:

This legislation seeks to require the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to require entrance–level and in–service police training to include training related to the criminal laws concerning stalking as they pertain to electronic surveillance or tracking. The training is to include prevention methods for victims and the documentation of digital evidence.

Under current law, the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) is required to establish the minimum training standards and curriculum for all police training schools. The MPTSC currently has required training, generally, on criminal law and services available for all victims of crime. Police officers are required to provide every victim with the Maryland Crime Victims and Witness Pamphlet. The Governor’s office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victims Services also has Victim’s Rights and Resources information posted on their website.

This legislation will require the MPTSC to add to an already long list of training mandates for both the entrance–level and in–service requirements. One of the concerns for law enforcement in SB 134 is the requirement that all police officers are to be trained to document digital evidence. This requirement would make it necessary for each officer to be able to identify, document, preserve and seize digital evidence without destroying or corrupting the data and be familiar with every potential device that could hold digital evidence. This ability is considered a special expertise and requires an investigator who is trained in the field as well as time to give the training necessary.

There is a specialized unit within the Department that deals specifically with any crime related to the use of computers or electronic devices. These investigators are specially trained and will assume the investigation of any complex crime related to computers or electronic stalking, in this case. This unit is also made available to our law enforcement partners who may not have their own personnel with this level of training. In order to achieve this expertise, members of this specialized unit undergo 18 months of training that is very expensive. Their technical proficiency is far greater than an average trooper and it is unrealistic that every trooper or police officer could be trained at the entrance or in-service level to be able to perform these duties.