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Colonel Dennis A. Strine
Warden

February 7, 2023

House Judiciary Committee
Delegate Luke Clippinger - Chair

Dear Chairman Clippinger and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I'm Carroll County Sheriff Jim DeWees, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit favorable testimony regarding House Bill 308 with amendments, Police Retention Workgroup. The amendment to add a representative from both the Maryland Sheriff's Association and the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association is key to making sure all the stakeholders are represented to discuss this important topic.

As the elected sheriff for Carroll County, I oversee both law enforcement and corrections with a total staff of 300 employees. I'm in my third term as the elected sheriff and I am a retired captain with the Maryland State Police where I served for 25 years.

In support of HB 308, I strongly agree that it's time to study police recruitment and retention. You can't discuss retention with examining how we recruit; the two are intertwined. How as a profession do we recruit and retain men & women with character, integrity, intelligence, ability, and compassion? We must look at how we can identify key recruiting tools that drew individuals to enter the profession; then dissect why so many leave before they can honorably retire.

This group should also look at the common practice of "lateralling" from one agency to another and how this unhealthy practice effects an agency's ability to maintain continuity of operations. Furthermore, this workgroup should take a holistic approach at examining both recruiting and retention and have representation from small and large agencies that represent all four corners of our state.

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I look forward to supporting this committee and working with the group should I have the future opportunity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James T. DeWees". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

James T. DeWees
Sheriff
Carroll County, Maryland