



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

House Bill 308

Police Retention Workgroup

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: February 7, 2023

From: Sarah Sample and Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 308 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would establish a workgroup to study the issues and factors contributing to the decline in police officer retention statewide. MACo's amendment is merely to strengthen the body's membership.

Staffing shortages have created complications across many sectors but few pose a comparable and immediate threat the way law enforcement shortages do. Vacancies, in conjunction with the percentage of employees eligible for retirement, paint an even more disturbing picture of the crisis. Including law enforcement officers in this workgroup can only enhance the group's effectiveness and outcomes.

County law enforcement officers are on the ground every day facing these retention challenges head-on – they see the workforce shortages juxtaposed with the evolving needs and challenges of their communities. These day-to-day, lived experiences of law enforcement are the clearest lens to bring these issues into focus for a capable, diverse, and well-meaning workgroup of stakeholders.

For these reasons, Counties support HB 308, **with an amendment** to include in the workgroup a representative of a police department in a large county jurisdiction and a representative of a sheriff's department in a jurisdiction where the sheriff's department serves as the primary law enforcement agency.

Counties applaud the willingness to focus attention on recommendations to help solve this growing problem. Including county representatives in that process will ensure an effective outcome, based on professional experience. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for HB 308.