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### HB637 - COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR DEPUTY SHERIFF'S AND CORRECTIONAL DEPUTIES

#### WASHINGTON COUNTY

#### POSITION: FAVORABLE

To: The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair  
The Honorable Mark S. Chang, Vice Chair  
Honorable Committee Members  
House Appropriations Committee

Date: March 6, 2023

The members of Washington County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #150 thank the members of the Appropriations Committee, and the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee (SB428) for their consideration of HB637, which if approved, would confer collective bargaining rights upon deputy sheriff's and correctional deputies employed by the Washington County Office of the Sheriff.

By conferring such rights on these employees, as supported by a unanimous Board of County Commissioners, these dedicated public safety employees would be joining a large number of other non-public safety Washington County government employees that currently enjoy the benefits of collective bargaining.

Historically, when a legislative body considers collective bargaining rights for sworn law enforcement employees, one issue stands out - strikes. HB637 expressly prohibits deputies from engaging in any form of a strike. Even if the legislation were silent on strikes, FOP Lodge 150's Constitution and By-laws both prohibit any form of a strike, which mirrors both the State and Nation FOP's Constitution and By-laws. The citizens of Washington County would never have to be concerned about the prospects of a strike.

A favorable report of this legislation and its ultimate passage would put Washington County on par with its bordering neighbors, Allegany and Frederick Counties, whose sheriff's deputies are covered by collective bargaining agreements. In this hyper competitive recruiting climate for law enforcement agencies across Maryland and across the country, collective bargaining will enhance Washington County's ability to attract the top qualified candidates that the citizens of Washington County expect and deserve, and whom Sheriff Albert undoubtedly desires to add to an already outstanding professional law enforcement agency in a thriving growing region of Maryland.

Respectfully,

