



STEUART PITTMAN
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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AMAL E. AWAD
CHIEF OF POLICE

RE: HB 308 Police Retention Workgroup

Position: SUPPORT

2/3/2023

Chairman Barnes and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

Over the past few years police agencies statewide have experienced a dramatic drop in applications for the job of sworn police officer. For each academy class in times past, Anne Arundel County Police would receive thousands of applications. By the end of the hiring process, we would find we had more qualified applicants than we had available positions in our department or more qualified applicants than we had capacity to train. Today, we can muster barely a few hundred applications as we struggle to reach our budgeted staffing levels or to fill an academy class.

In the past, academy classes would be filled with as many as fifty recruits. Today, we strain to place fifteen in a class. Despite dozens of vacancies, we have had to cancel academy classes due to insufficient candidates or combine planned academy class sessions in order to even make it possible to hold an academy class at all.

Recruiting minority candidates has been especially challenging. Our agency has implemented strategies aimed at recruiting from minority populations such as appointing minority officers to recruitment roles, visiting Historically Black Colleges and Universities in and beyond Maryland, and targeting billboards and radio ads toward minority communities. Our agency has also implemented programs to mentor and assist applicants before and during the application process. But still, we find ourselves struggling to staff our agency, particularly with minority officers.

With rising crime rates statewide and in the face of a nationwide anti-police narrative still playing out, the task of finding, not just qualified, but exemplary candidates to be police officers is of the utmost importance, but extraordinarily challenging. Our citizens demand and deserve compassionate, skilled, and dedicated officers serving their need to create safe communities.

It is imperative that steps are taking to reverse these declining recruitment trends being seen by law enforcement professionals across the state. Understanding the problem is the first step towards solving it, and **Anne Arundel County Police SUPPORTS HB 308** and its goal to better understand why we cannot effectively fill our ranks and how to overcome those challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Shier".

Lieutenant Michael Shier *Esq.*
Anne Arundel County Police

