

January 19, 2023
The Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
SB 68 – Law Enforcement Officer’s Pension System – Crisfield Police Department
Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you, Chair Jackson, and members of the distinguished Senate Budget and Taxation Pension Subcommittee for allowing me to present Senate Bill 68 – Law Enforcement Officer’s Pension System – Crisfield Police Department.

This legislation would allow the members of the Crisfield Police Department to participate in the Law Enforcement Officers’ Pension System. This is a priority local bill that is absolutely essential to the recruitment and retention of the Crisfield Police Department.

I originally introduced this bill last year. With the unanimous support of this subcommittee and the full Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, it unanimously passed the Senate. It was heard in the House, but did not make final passage in the closing days of the session. I prefiled this local bill this session with the intention of ensuring enough time for consideration in both the Senate and the House for final passage this session.

As way of background, former Crisfield Police Chief David Dalfonso had been working diligently with officials from the Maryland Retirement and Pension System since September 2021 after receiving approval from the Crisfield Mayor and City Council for the Police Department to apply and enter LEOPS. Ms. Anne Gawthrop, Director of Legislative Affairs at the Maryland Retirement and Pension System, has been immensely helpful throughout this entire process, and she is here today to answer any questions related to SB 68.

During this long process, Chief Dalfonso was informed that legislation was required for the Crisfield Police Department to participate in LEOPS as the City of Crisfield currently is participating in a non-contributory retirement system.

Both former Chief Dalfonso and current Crisfield Police Chief Rick Taylor have stressed that securing LEOPS for the officers of the Crisfield Police Department is a key tool to retain and recruit the Crisfield Police workforce. This important bill also will allow the Crisfield Police to remain competitive with neighboring law enforcement agencies and jurisdictions during a rampant law enforcement shortage across the Shore and the State of Maryland.

You will hear from both Crisfield Police Chief Taylor and Crisfield Mayor Darlene Taylor, elected this past June, on the ongoing challenges of the Crisfield Police Department and the importance of passing this local priority bill this session. I have been impressed with the strong coordination between the Chief and the Mayor in working together on this bill, and their strong advocacy on this shared public safety priority. It has been a pleasure and honor to work with them both on passage of SB 68.

Thank you for your kind attention and consideration, and I respectfully ask for a favorable report of SB 68.