



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chairman, and
Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Natasha Mehu, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: March 2, 2023

RE: **SB 597 Pensions and Retirement – Forfeiture of Benefits – Law Enforcement Officers**

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **OPPOSE** SB 597. This bill provides for the forfeiture of a law enforcement officer's pension.

MCPA and MSA strongly oppose this bill and believe it exhibits a lack of respect for the men and women who work in this profession. Further, it is an unnecessary and punitive measure to degrade the Law Enforcement profession.

The attempt to forfeit a Police Officer's vested pension and retirement benefits provides an incredible disincentive for persons to enter into and remain in this profession. The pension benefits that have been earned throughout one's public service career, are contractually obligated as prior benefits similar to an IRA and are equally as critical to the Officer, Officer's spouse or partner and their dependent children, who will rely on these pension benefits as a source of income. This legislation is also inconsistent with State and Federal law protecting private pensions from forfeiture in the case of employee misconduct.

Maryland's law enforcement agencies are already experiencing difficulty in recruiting. Measures such as this will further deter individuals from going into this profession. These types of actions will make it more difficult to keep our communities safe, provide protection to victims, and properly investigate crimes.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **OPPOSE** SB 597 and urge an **UNFAVORABLE** Committee report.