

BENJAMIN BROOKS
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB934
Baltimore County – Sheriff - Salary

Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 29, 2024

Chair West, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on SB934 - Baltimore County - Sheriff - Salary. The purpose of this bill is to increase Baltimore County Sheriff's compensation to meet the minimum salary approved by the County Council in 2023 and to ensure the position attracts the best talent.

Baltimore County is Maryland's third most populous county and has the 21st largest police agency in the nation. The sheriff's salary should be competitive with that of other large jurisdictions. SB934 would gradually increase the Baltimore County Sheriff's salary over the next several years, beginning in 2026.

By approved referendum, in accordance with County Council Bill No. 17-18, (2018), Baltimore County's Charter, Section 505 of Article 5, was amended to require that officers and employees in the *exempt service*, as defined by Section 801 of the County Charter (and subject to the applicable merit system provisions of the County Personnel law), have their compensation determined by a system adopted or amended by the County Council, upon the recommendation of the County Executive (hereinafter referred to as "Compensation Plan," or "Plan"). Officers and employees of the Exempt Service as defined in Section 801 of the Charter includes "all elected officials" including the elected Sheriff of Baltimore County.

In 2022, Baltimore County engaged a consulting firm to conduct market research and benchmark county employee and elected officials' salaries against comparable Maryland jurisdictions and develop recommendations for a comprehensive compensation plan. The consultant's analysis revealed that State law, which dictates the Sheriff's salary (Md. Code Court and Judicial Proceedings § 2-317) had not been updated in 15 years. This has resulted in the Baltimore County Sheriff's salary remaining extremely low, compared to other large jurisdictions, and unchanged for at least 12 years. The Baltimore County Sheriffs' compensation is the lowest among all comparative jurisdictions in the region.

This legislation would increase the Sheriff's compensation to meet the minimum salary approved by the County Council in 2023 and provide for incremental increases in future years.

Baltimore County Sheriff is the principal conservator of peace within the county and plays an important role in the County's judicial system. Coordinating these services in the third most populous county in the state is a responsibility not reflected in the sheriff's current salary, which is why the County Council approved raising it. This legislation is merely confirming what the County Council passed.

For these reasons, I am requesting a favorable report on SB934.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Benjamin Brooks