



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



BEARNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG
Mayor

MICHAEL S. HARRISON
Police Commissioner

SB72

January 15, 2020

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Michael Harrison, Commissioner, Baltimore Police Department

RE: Senate Bill 72 – Baltimore City - Members of the Command Staff of the Police Department - Residency Requirements

POSITION: OPPOSE

Chairman Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore Police Department ("BPD" or "the Department") **opposes** Senate Bill 72.

Senate Bill 72 authorizes the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City to require by ordinance that members of the command staff of the Police Department of Baltimore City, at the rank of captain or above, reside in Baltimore City.

While this bill is well intentioned, it would have a catastrophic and cataclysmic impact on the Baltimore Police Department. As an agency with a notable staffing shortage, we have developed and are currently executing a strategic recruitment campaign that is targeting city residents, persons of color and women in the hopes of increasing diversity and city residency amongst our ranks. We believe in those goals and stand by them.

That being said, in order to meet our operational needs, BPD must swiftly hire good, strong, qualified candidates, regardless of where they are from or where they reside. As we spend significant resources on the recruitment and training of these new officers, we want them to see BPD as a department within which they will be able to grow professionally, personally and intellectually. Adding extraneous requirements on promotional viability will greatly inhibit our ability to recruit new and lateral officers who envision advancing in rank throughout their career. It will also create an environment where officers who want to be promoted will be more likely to transfer to other law enforcement agencies to find more favorable advancement opportunities.

Additionally, this bill will prevent the Commissioner, any Commissioner, from identifying those future leaders who are the most qualified to serve in command positions. In a Department that is well known more for their mistakes and lack of adequate supervision at all levels, we must put people into leadership positions who have the capacity, the will and the commitment to be a part of the new Baltimore Police Department.

The Department needs commanders who understand the tenants of fiscal responsibility, the impact of proper asset management, and the importance of building relationships with community residents. On top of all of that, the Department needs these commanders to make sound tactical and deployment decisions as crime patterns

c/o 242 West 29th Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21211-2908

shift. Most importantly, our residents deserve the best and the brightest to serve in command positions so that we can make the city safer.

If this bill passes, the most important qualifier a Commissioner will be permitted to consider when making personnel decisions is where the candidate lives. That is problematic and will result in negative consequences in the Department's ability to perform its mission and adequately address crime in Baltimore City.

Therefore, we respectfully request an **unfavorable** report on Senate Bill 72. Thank you.