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**BILL NO.: SB 454**

**TITLE:** Public Safety – Mandatory Mental Health Training – First Responders and Law Enforcement Officers

**SPONSOR:** Senator Pinsky

**COMMITTEE:** Judicial Proceedings

**POSITION:** **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

**DATE:** February 13, 2020

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS** Senate Bill 454 – Public Safety – Mandatory Mental Health Training – First Responders and Law Enforcement Officers. Under this proposed legislation, each first responder and law enforcement officer in Maryland would be required to complete mental health awareness training approved by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission.

Law enforcement officials often are the ones responding to mental health crises, and without adequate tools to respond to a situation, both the officials and the people in crisis can end up in danger. SB 454 addresses this issue, seeking to guarantee that law enforcement officials know how to effectively employ crisis de-escalation techniques and put individuals in contact with mental health services. Passing this legislation would be a step towards improving mental health support systems for law enforcement personnel.

However, the requirement that training be approved by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission could interfere with the training of Baltimore County's first responders. Baltimore County proposes the bill be amended to have the mental health awareness training be approved by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), or by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS). This is where our current standards are created.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on SB 454. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.