



JEFFREY R. GAHLER  
SHERIFF

# HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**Senate Bill 599 - Support**

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## Sheriff of Harford County - Salary

### Letter of Support to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 14, 2020

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I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 599, Sheriff of Harford County - Salary.

The Harford County Sheriff's Office, with the support and funding from County Executive Barry Glassman, has worked diligently in an effort to bring all Sheriff's Office salaries to competitive market rates. This effort has taken many years and has been guided by two independent salary studies, comparing the salaries of our personnel to those of surrounding police departments, correctional departments and other Sheriff's Offices, from which we compete for a very limited applicant pool.

County Executive Glassman has advised it is his plan to fund the remaining element of the latest salary study which will offer a needed boost to sworn law enforcement salaries, which are currently well below the market rate. Although no rank or position will move to the top range of those agencies that were part of the study, the increases will place each rank into a more competitive standing. Of course, the only salary that is not part of the study is that of the next term Sheriff, which must be modified through the legislative process.

Where the last modification to the salary of the sheriff has not surpassed that of the Chief Deputy and is equal to a senior law enforcement Major, implementation of the salary study will place the Sheriff's salary on par with that of a law enforcement Captain by this July (FY21). Providing any additional increases over the next two fiscal years, the Sheriff's salary for the incoming Sheriff in 2022 will likely be equivalent to a law enforcement Lieutenant.

In its current form, Senate Bill 599 mirrors the salary plan currently in place for the Office of Sheriff in Charles County. The Charles County Sheriff's salary is set at the start of a term to that of a Lieutenant Colonel's final pay step in the Maryland State Police pay structure and does not change during the term. The salary of a

Maryland State Police Lieutenant Colonel (top step) will go to \$173,793 this July (FY21) and is likely to increase again prior to FY23 when the Office will again be up for election.

The Charles County Sheriff's Office and the Harford County Sheriff's Office stand unique in size and scope of services from all other Sheriff's Offices in the State. Each agency is staffed with more than 600 employees responsible for primary law enforcement functions, corrections, civil process, and court security (Harford also has Animal Control). For this reason, establishing parity with the Charles County Sheriff's Salary structure, as already existing in law, was thought to offer a good option for this bill and it also appears to be a rate that would place the next elected sheriff in the area projected to be slightly ahead or slightly behind the Chief Deputy of the Office.

In discussing this bill with County Executive Glassman, he is in agreement that the current salary (with annual cpi adjustment) has not remained competitive with other comparable sheriffs/chiefs and supports an increase. The County Executive has outlined his beliefs that the salary figure should be noted in any legislation and agrees that, based on the information above and the salary study data, that the salary for the Office of Sheriff at the start of the next term should be designated at \$175,000 with annual cpi based adjustment. At this rate, the County Executive offered his support for the bill.

Accordingly, I request an amendment to the bill denoting this rate and ask the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 599.

Sincerely,  
Sheriff Jeffrey R. Gahler