



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

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BILL: HOUSE BILL 1137

POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

EXPLANATION: This bill proposes to make employees of the Central Home Detention Unit (CDHU) who already have limited arrest authority full police officers.

COMMENTS:

- The Department is tasked with overseeing the Division of Parole and Probation (DPP), which supervises individuals within the community who are either awaiting trial, placed on supervised probation, have been paroled by the Maryland Parole Commission, or placed on Mandatory Supervision upon release under the authority of the Maryland Parole Commission. DPP also supervises Marylanders who have been court-ordered into the Drinking Driver Monitor Program.
- Currently the Department's CHDU enforcement officers are correctional officers with limited arrest powers, granting them the authority to arrest individuals who are on home detention. Providing these officers with full police authority would result in a vast expansion of their duties and authority, resulting in a significant public safety impact.
- Adding employees of the CHDU to Criminal Procedures Article § 2-101 and Public Safety Article § 3-101 removes the employees from the classification of correctional officer and places them into the classification of police officer. This change will move the Department's current positions from the Standard Salary Schedule Scale into the Law Enforcement Officers Pension System (LEOPS).
- Moving the employees of CDHU into LEOPS would result in an annual salary increase of \$630,000, excluding health insurance costs. This increase is attributed to a change in the retirement rate from 19.38% to 41.43%.
- Being certified as a police officer in Maryland requires adherence to the selection standards established by the Police Training and Standards

Commission to include completion of a full background investigation and criminal records check and fingerprints.

- Certification as a police officer also requires completion of applicable training as prescribed in Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 12.04.01.09 and field training as prescribed in 12.04.01.17. The training would consist of full-time enrollment and completion of an approximate 7-month entrance-level police academy and 240 hours of field training.
- The Department currently employs 36 enforcement officers in CDHU. All 36 of these officers would need to complete the entrance-level police academy and 240 hours of field training. Because the CDHU does not have anyone qualified as a Field Training Officer (FTO), field training would initially be conducted by personnel who are not familiar with the operations of CDHU.
- Requiring the enforcement officers to complete an entrance-level police academy and field training would need to be staggered to avoid a shut-down of CDHU so all of the officers could complete the academy at one time. This will leave CDHU understaffed and could take several years to have all of the officers trained.
- The duties of the enforcement officers vary greatly from the duties of a police officer. According to the Department's MS-22 (job description), CHDU enforcement officers spend their time:
 - Conducting patrols in various communities of Baltimore City and surrounding counties, visiting offenders in their homes and other approved locations. This patrol is specific to the supervision of individuals who are on home detention and NOT for the purpose of crime prevention in the State.
 - Detecting program violations and taking appropriate action.
 - Protecting public safety and conducting surveillance of the violated offender via electronic monitoring systems.
 - Completing training to perform collateral and specialized duties.
- In addition to the training requirements that must be met, The Department will need to equip CDHU with new law enforcement vehicles. The vehicles are projected to cost \$39,500/each for a projected cost of \$1,422,000.

- The projected costs to equip officers, including adjusted salaries, is \$2,052,000. This does not include uniforms and additional equipment.

CONCLUSION: The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as it deliberates HB 1137.