

State of Maryland

Commission on Civil Rights

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”



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February 17, 2021

Senate Bill 608 – Public Safety – Maryland Police Training & Standards Commission POSITION: Support

Dear Chairperson Smith, Vice Chairperson Waldstreicher, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, and source of income.

Senate Bill 608 names the Secretary of State Police as the chair of the Maryland Public Safety Training & Standards Commission (“MPSTSC”). Under the bill, the MPSTSC is required to conduct job task analyses for entry-level police officers every 10 years beginning December 31, 2021, in addition to existing mandates. The MPSTSC is further required to post on its website and notify all law enforcement agencies on all training topics in the bill (including anti-discrimination, profiling, and use of force/de-escalation), as well as what training topics are required in the next calendar year. The MPSTSC must verify that certified police officers maintain certification in lifesaving techniques, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The bill further reforms standards for certifying and employing law enforcement officers, including decertification if the officer is convicted of a felony or misdemeanor with a penalty of more than 1 year.

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights supports SB608 because inclusion of anti-discrimination, profiling, and use of force/de-escalation training will help to lay an important informational foundation in hopefully reducing acts of discrimination, bias, and misconduct when an officer is carrying out their duties. Additionally, by publishing these trainings online, the MPSTSC is creating an environment whereby the community can partner with the MPSTSC to ensure that any trainings offered and mandated are effective at meeting the community’s needs.

For these reasons and more, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on SB608. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter.

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.