

Bridges Testimony HB0298.pdf

Uploaded by: Asia Williams

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 7th, 2023

RE: State Police Retirement System and Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Deferred Retirement Option Program – Alterations HB0298

Good Afternoon Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

House Bill 0298 is proposed to increase the maximum number of years that members of the state police retirement system are eligible to participate in the deferred retirement options program, increasing eligibility from 30 to 32 years. This change will stand to positively impact the overall performance of the State Police. Most officers represented by the State Law Enforcement Officers Labor Alliance are a part of the State Law Enforcement Officers Pension System. Maryland State Police max out potential benefits at 28 years of service, while those in other agencies that are part of the system max out at 32 and a half years. If a State Police member presently participates in the Deferred Retirement Options Program they must leave the agency after 30 years, while law enforcement professionals in other agencies can continue to earn multipliers for another 2 and a half years. This proposal would put the Maryland State Police on par with the majority of other agencies within the Law Enforcement Officers Pension System and allow officers who elect to extend their participation in DROP to reap the corresponding retirement benefits by reaching 32 years of service.

The recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers is essential to effective service. Statewide, law enforcement agencies are struggling to keep departments fully staffed as resignations increase and hiring becomes more difficult in today's competitive labor market. The Police Executive Research Forum conducted a study of about 200 law enforcement agencies nationwide, studies showed that the resignation rate per 100 officers increased 18 percent between 2020 and 2021, while the rate of retirement rose by 40 percent. With State Police recruiting and retention efforts struggling, this legislation will offer a cost neutral enhancement to assist efforts to recruit and retain experienced law enforcement officers. We ask the Committee for a favorable report on House Bill 0298.

HB 298 APR 02-07-2023 SLEOLA FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: David Lewis

Position: FAV



**State Law Enforcement
Officers Labor Alliance**
542 Ritchie Highway
Severna Park, Maryland 21146



February 7, 2023

Delegate Ben Barnes
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
121 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB 298 – State Police Retirement System and Law Enforcement Officers’ Pension
System – Deferred Retirement Option Program – Alterations

Dear Chair Barnes:

The State Law Enforcement Labor Alliance (SLEOLA) is the exclusive representative for 1,757 active state law enforcement officers. We are writing in Support of House Bill 298. Our agencies have continued to have difficulties with recruiting and retention. House Bill 298 would assist with retention of officers and keep our valuable experience within law enforcement for several more years.

The Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) is a cost-effective option for retaining experienced officers. The Department of Legislative Services previously testified that the DROP was in fact a cost savings item. The Fiscal Note reflects savings to the State of \$400,000.

A survey was conducted with members of the Maryland State Police, Natural Resources Police and the Capitol Police, which are the majority of SLEOLA members along with Commissioned Officers, not represented by SLEOLA. The survey resulted in an overwhelming 89.1% in support of the extension. Attached are additional charts to better understand the results of the survey.

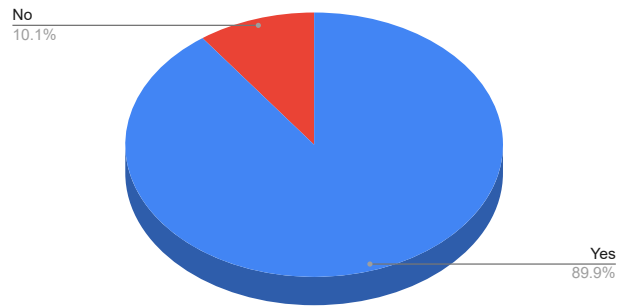
I would like to thank our sponsor Delegate Bridges and would ask the committee for favorable support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

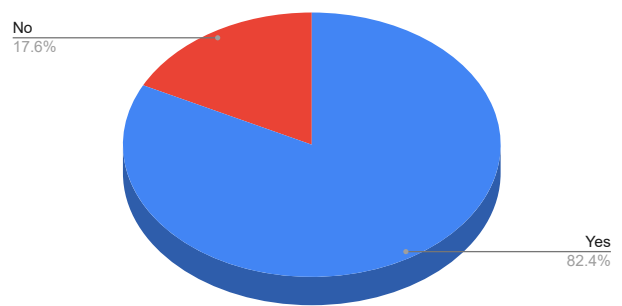
David Lewis
Vice President

cc: Members, House Appropriations Committee

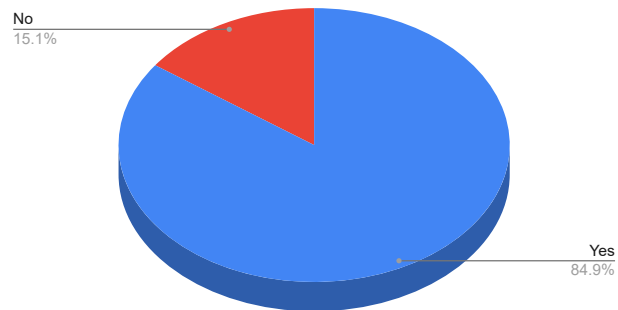
SLEOLA



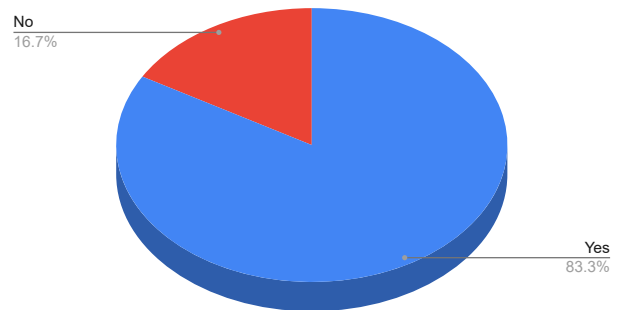
Minorities



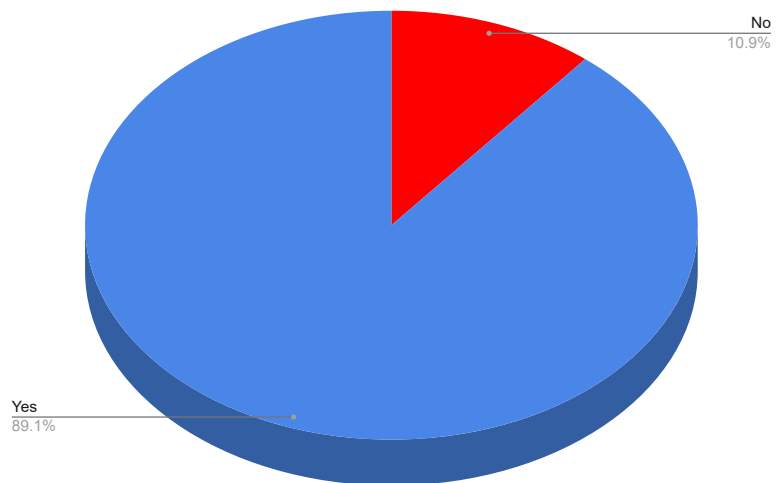
Females



Commissioned Officers



Overall



HB 298 Support

Uploaded by: Gerald Eaton, Jr.

Position: FAV



HARFORD COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF'S UNION

PO Box 881, Bel Air, Maryland 21014

www.hcdsu.org

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: House Bill 298 - State Police Retirement System and Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System –
Deferred Retirement Option Program – Alterations (SUPPORT)**

Dear Chairman Barnes and members of the Appropriations Committee,

The Harford County Deputy Sheriff's Union supports House Bill 298. We represent over 300 sworn deputies of the Harford County Sheriff's Office who serve each day to keep citizens safe in Harford County and Maryland.

Recruitment and retention continue to be a challenge for law enforcement agencies across Maryland jurisdictions. Although law enforcement candidates enter the profession for many reasons, the ability to attain a reliable pension benefit is certainly a primary consideration for candidates and current members of the LEOPS plan.

House Bill 298 improves the DROP program by increasing the years of eligibility to 32 years of creditable service and increases the period to participate to 7 years. This change is done in a fiscally responsible manner and does not have a significant fiscal impact.

House Bill 298 takes an initial step to keep the LEOPS pension benefit competitive as we consider additional steps to improve the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the SUPPORT of the Harford County Deputy's Union today and we ask for a FAVORABLE report on House Bill 298.

Sincerely,
[Gerald Eaton Jr](#)
Gerald Eaton
Harford County Deputy Sheriff's Union

MTA Favorable HB298 2-7-23.pdf

Uploaded by: Jenna Massoni

Position: FAV



M a r y l a n d Troopers Association



INCORPORATED 1979

February 7 2023

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chairman and Members of the Appropriations Committee

RE: HB 298 State Police Retirement System and Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System– Deferred Retirement Option Program – Alterations

POSITION: SUPPORT

The MTA supports HB 298 which increases the maximum number of years of service that members of the State Police Retirement System can use to participate in the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) from 30 to 32; along with increasing the number of years that members of the State Police Retirement can participate in the DROP from 5 to 7.

Applications to the Maryland State Police are down 40% over last year. This proposed alteration to the DROP program would significantly benefit the state in retaining Troopers who have twenty five plus years of experience, knowledge and expertise as well as assist in new recruiting.

Troopers devote their lives to serving the people of Maryland and this legislation has the potential to benefit the retirement savings of members of the Maryland Troopers Association. This is not only well-deserved for the protectors of our state, but it could also be an incentive for recruitment and retention within Maryland State Police.

Therefore, we support HB 298 and urge a favorable report.

Brian Blubaugh
President
Maryland Troopers Association

Member of National Troopers Coalition
1300 REISTERSTOWN ROAD, PIKESVILLE, MARYLAND 21208 (410) 653-3885 1-800-TROOPER
E-mail: info@mdtroopers.org

HB 298 Support

Uploaded by: Jim Kruszynski

Position: FAV



Maryland Transportation Authority Police Lodge #34



President
James Kruszynski III



Lodge Attorney
Herbert Weiner

House Appropriations Committee
Delegate Ben Barnes
Room 121
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 3, 2023

RE: Senate Bill 139 -State Police Retirement System and Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Deferred Retirement Option Program - Alterations (SUPPORT)

Dear Chairman Barnes and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Maryland Transportation Authority Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Lodge 34 strongly supports House Bill 298. FOP Lodge 34 represents the brave men and women of the Maryland Transportation Authority Police which is the largest agency in the Law Enforcement Officers Pension System (LEOPS).

House Bill 298 extends our Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) from a maximum of 5 years to a maximum of 7 years. This extension not only provides a DECREASE in financial liabilities and contributions for the State, it also provides some relief to Police agencies who are experiencing record numbers of early retirements by qualified veteran Officers which is contributing to record high Police Officer vacancies across the State. It's imperative that we equip our Police Agencies with competitive pension and benefit options in a effort to attract the best qualified applicants in an ever dwindling applicant pool. This small adjustment to our DROP program will provide LEOPS agencies a big step in that direction.

Therefore, on behalf of the almost 600 members of Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 34, I thank you for your support and your FAVORABLE report on House Bill 298.

Sincerely,

Jim Kruszynski
President
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 34