



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.