

Mr. Chairman, Most Honorable Delegates, of the Appropriations Committee and all interested parties and guests

Sarah Mastronardi, retired First Sergeant Maryland State Police
President of the State Police Alumni Association

I realize this dilemma was not caused by Governor Moore or the Delegates in this room, but it happened. It appears that no action plan was put in place until SB946. And those provisions to assist, educate, and train our seniors have not been put in place to assist the over 50,000 state retirees effected by the loss of their prescription drug plan. And Open Enrollment is only seven months away.

Our retirees, many in their eighties, are not prepared for this. Not only are many not technology savvy, but many have physical impairments that will burden them from obtaining the best plan. Even I receive 3 to 4 calls a day from telemarketing groups trying to sell Medicare advantage programs. That oxymoron is there is no advantage, just more money out of pocket that many of our folks don't have.

Some of our retirees are getting a \$113 SS check and a monthly retirement check under poverty level. Our retirees hired before 1987, were not offered or paid into SS. This unique, most vulnerable group of state retirees are the ones that are most adversely affected by the loss of the prescription drug plan. Many were told as a police officer you won't live to have SS and the employer offered a lower salary that was often compensated with good benefits that included the prescription drug plan. I believe that we could identify this limited group of retirees and retain their prescription plan. This is such a serious issue that has put many of our older seniors in a panic.

Let me be clear, our State Troopers today receive a monthly income that resembles our retirees Annual Retirement Salary. It is those aging retirees that will face an overwhelming deficit as they attempt to budget their "New" prescription drug plan. Sometimes, you must put a FACE on the dilemma that many of our folks are facing.

I will close with an Excerpt from Governor Moore's State of State Address in February.

support those who run toward the danger instead of running away from it. That means standing with our state workers, who often go unsung and unheralded. And that means uplifting the families of those who put everything on the line to keep us safe. Governor Moore

Our men and women put it all on the line to keep Marylanders safe. They completed their mission for the citizens of the Great State of Maryland; many were injured in the course of their duties, both physically and mentally. Now, I respectfully ask for a favorable vote on this bill.

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