



# Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair and  
Members of the Appropriations Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee  
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee  
Natasha Mehu, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: March 12, 2024

RE: **HB 1389 Public Safety Officer – Performance of Duties – Death Benefit**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT HB 1389**. As introduced, this bill changes the eligibility requirements for a public safety death benefit award for an individual who commits suicide. As amended it will expand benefits for families of fallen public safety officers and public safety officers who suffer from a disability or from post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD).

The intent of HB 1389 is to align with recent changes to the federal Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program. In 2022, federal legislation passed to expand coverage to include mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), disabilities caused by attempted suicides, and deaths caused by officer suicides.

Regardless of the agency or uniform worn, the men and women of law enforcement and other public safety occupations have stepped forward on behalf of the citizens of their communities and of our State. Each one has taken an oath, a promise, to put the well-being of others first. As we have seen all too often, these professionals put their lives and safety on the line each shift they work. The situations they encounter are traumatic, take an emotional toll, and unfortunately, in some cases, may result in an officer taking his or her own life. When these situations occur, families struggle as well.

HB 1389 recognizes and honors the sacrifice of public safety officers and their families. MCPA and MSA believe this is warranted and appropriate considering the dangerous work these individuals perform throughout their careers and their dedication to service and protection of the public.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT HB 1389** and urge a **FAVORABLE** report.

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