

# **Testimony for SB48 1.23.24.pdf**

Uploaded by: Andrew Friedson

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

ANDREW FRIEDSON  
COUNCIL PRESIDENT

CHAIR, PLANNING, HOUSING AND PARKS COMMITTEE  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND FISCAL POLICY COMMITTEE

January 23, 2024

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith  
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Andrew Friedson  
President, Montgomery County Council

SUBJECT: **MD Police Training & Standards - Eligibility: "Freedom to Serve" (SB48)**

---

As President of the Montgomery County Council, I am writing to you to express support for SB48 – Maryland Police training and Standards – Police Officer Certification – Eligibility.

As you are aware, Montgomery County and the State of Maryland, face significant recruitment and retention challenges in public safety. Critical shortages mean that police officers are stretched thin, impacting department morale and retention efforts. Montgomery County's police force needs nearly two hundred additional officers - a 12.5% vacancy rate. This number is projected to rise to 19% by mid-2025. With these significant recruitment and retention challenges, we need the State's support to provide every tool possible to fill current vacancies to keep our communities safe.

The Freedom to Serve Act will allow all who have served our country the opportunity to bring their skills and experience to State and local police departments and serve their communities. It is a win-win for our country's veterans and police recruitment efforts, providing meaningful employment opportunities and enlarging the potential applicant pool.

We respectfully recommend a favorable report on Senate Bill 48 and appreciate your consideration of our testimony.

**SB0048\_Police\_Officer\_Certification\_MLC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



## TESTIMONY FOR SB0048

### MARYLAND POLICE TRAINING AND STANDARDS COMMISSION

#### POLICE OFFICER CERTIFICATION – ELIGIBILITY

**Bill Sponsors:** Senator Kagan

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0048 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The vacancies in our police forces around the state are well documented. Montgomery County Police Department, for example, had 176 unfilled positions as of last October, adding almost a minute to response times. Our new marijuana laws further reduce the pool of eligible candidates. All the while crime rates are surging, making this a priority issue for Governor Moore.

Maryland needs to do more to reduce the number of vacancies in police forces around the state. One way is to remove certain citizenship requirements for an individual who is a permanent legal resident of the United States and is an honorably discharged veteran. Widening this cohort to include those who have served in the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard will also help.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition believes we need police forces that have the required staffing level to meet our basic need for security.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.

# **Support SB48 Testimony\_Councilmember Evan Glass.pd**

Uploaded by: Evan Glass

Position: FAV



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

**EVAN GLASS**  
COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE

TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE, CHAIR  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

William Smith, Chair  
Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

**Position: Support SB48**

Chairman Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I write to you expressing my support for SB48, Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission - Police Officer Certification – Eligibility.

Jurisdictions across the state and country, including Montgomery County, are facing difficulties hiring individuals to serve in law enforcement. While we have implemented financial incentives to recruit qualified individuals, our ranks remain lower than many would prefer. Resolving this situation will require a multiprong approach, one of which is to reimagine the requirements to hold law enforcement positions.

SB48 is an innovative approach to increasing the pool of law enforcement applicants. By expanding employment opportunities to permanent legal residents of the United States who were honorably discharged veterans of the United States armed forces, we are helping create career pathways for individuals who served our country. In a community like Montgomery County where one-third of our residents are foreign born, this policy would provide additional benefits and assist with our efforts to foster an inclusive community policing strategy.

If these dedicated individuals are willing to put their lives on the line to protect our country, they should be allowed to put their lives on the line to serve our communities.

I ask that the Committee support this legislation and provide local jurisdictions with addition strategies to keeping our residents safe.

Thank you for your consideration.

Evan Glass  
Councilmember

# **Albornoz Testimony In Support SB 48.pdf**

Uploaded by: Gabe Albornoz

Position: FAV



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**

GABE ALBORNOZ  
COUNCILMEMBER – At Large

CHAIR  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

January 24, 2024

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Gabe Albornoz  
Montgomery County Councilmember – At Large

RE: **Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 48 – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Police Officer Certification - Eligibility**

---

It is an honor to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 48 – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Police Officer Certification – Eligibility. Expanding the eligibility of those who can serve our communities is a win for all. Those who have served our country, are honorably discharged, and are permanent legal residents deserve the opportunity to bring their skills and diversity to our local police forces.

Our local police agencies will benefit from additional recruits who can bring much needed diversity and multilingual skills to local law enforcement. Currently in Montgomery County, we have a 12.6% vacancy rate. That equates to 161 vacant officer positions in a police force that provides law enforcement for a population of over 1 million residents. Every filled position counts.

This Senate Bill is an important and necessary step in supporting our local law enforcement agencies. Please give Senate Bill 48 a favorable report.

# **MMC Testimony SB0048 Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jayson Spiegel

Position: FAV



# MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

*Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy*

January 23, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Maryland Senate  
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: **Request for Favorable Report – HB 0048** – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission - Police Officer Certification – Eligibility (“Freedom to Serve Act”)

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC) and as its President, I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report by the Committee on SB 0048, the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Police Officer Certification – Eligibility (“Freedom to Serve Act”)**, sponsored by Senator Cheryl Kagan.

The legislation will enable permanent legal residents of the United States who were honorably discharged United States armed forces veterans, or who serve in the National Guard or Reserve, to become police officers even if they do not have a pending citizenship application. The bill passed the House in the 2023 General Assembly session.

Maryland currently has a **critical** shortage of law enforcement officers. Retirements and resignations exceed recruitment. The Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Maryland stated during an interview on WJZ CBS Baltimore that the issue of police staffing shortages is “an extremely serious problem . . . (that is) not getting better, it’s getting worse.”

SB 0048 would expand the pool of potential law enforcement officers. Honorably discharged veterans and members of the National Guard and Reserve, whether or not they have a pending citizenship application, have already demonstrated their willingness to serve their country and community. They have been vetted and underwent a thorough background investigation before being allowed to join the military. They have trained in safe use of weapons and rules of engagement.

Moreover, everybody who has ever served, regardless of their specialty or branch of service, has performed law enforcement functions by performing guard duty, credentials checks, and other activities. They have also been trained in civil disturbance and crowd control.

Critically, Maryland needs law enforcement officers who speak foreign languages and possess cultural sensitivity to interact with non-English speaking, immigrant populations. Veterans who are themselves immigrants will bring these vital skills and experiences, including cultural competency, to their law enforcement careers.

Various states already have enacted legislation enabling resident alien veterans to become police officers:

- Three states (Colorado, Vermont and West Virginia) have no citizenship requirement to become a police officer.
- Seven states (Hawaii, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Utah and Washington) only require permanent resident status or work authorization.

The MMC strongly supports the provision that would also **enable currently serving members of the National Guard and Reserve** to become police officers if they are permanent legal residents of the United States even if they do not have a pending citizenship application.

Members of the Guard and Reserve already live in the communities where they would serve. They undergo the exact same training as their active-duty counterparts and bring the same qualifications.

All National Guard personnel, regardless of their actual military specialty, are trained to support law enforcement and civil disturbance response. Many Maryland National Guard personnel were on duty at the Capitol after the January 6 Insurrection and were on duty in Baltimore after the death of Freddie Gray.

Civilian law enforcement recruiters could team with National Guard or Reserve recruiters to identify noncitizens with an aptitude and interest in law enforcement. They could join the Guard or Reserve, complete Initial Entry Training, join a unit and then start training to be a law enforcement officer in their community. Given that police, the National Guard and Reserve Components all face severe recruiting challenges, such a partnership could be a “win-win.”

I also want to note that my hometown, the City of Gaithersburg, America’s most diverse city, endorsed this legislation.

**1101 Mercantile Lane, Suite 260 • Largo, Maryland 20774  
(301) 583-8687 • (800) 808-4517**

The Maryland Military Coalition is a non-partisan organization of 19 Veteran organizations representing over 150,000 Maryland uniformed services men and women and their families -- almost half of the 355,000 veterans in the State.

We want to thank Senator Kagan for her leadership on this issue. I urge the Committee to favorably report the bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J Spiegel".

Jayson Spiegel  
LTC USAR (Ret)  
President

**Senate Bill 48.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kate Stewart

Position: FAV



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

**KATE STEWART**  
**VICE PRESIDENT**  
**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**

1/24/24

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr. Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee  
FROM: Kate Stewart Montgomery County Councilmember – At Large  
RE: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 48 – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Police Officer Certification - Eligibility

---

I want to express my support for Senate Bill 48 – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Police Officer Certification – Eligibility. Broadening the eligibility to include honorably discharged veterans and lawful permanent residents is a commendable move that stands to benefit our communities significantly. Montgomery County is noted as one of the most diverse counties nationally, with four cities in the top ten regularly. The inclusion of individuals with diverse backgrounds and multilingual capabilities will undoubtedly enhance the effectiveness of our local police forces.

In Montgomery County, our police department is facing a considerable challenge with 176 vacancies, representing a vacancy rate of 14%. In 2022, the department experienced a shortfall of 102 officers. Currently, a critical 41.7% of current sworn officers are eligible for retirement. This includes 15.3% eligible for the Discontinued Service Retirement Program (DRSP) with 25 or more years of service, 9.7% at full retirement age but not in the DRSP (25 or more years of service), and 16.7% eligible for early retirement with between 20-24 years of service. The urgency to address these staffing issues from current vacancies and potential imminent retirements is evident, making this legislation of utmost importance. Filling these positions is essential for a police force tasked with serving a population exceeding one million residents.

Senate Bill 48 represents a crucial measure supporting the needs of our local law enforcement agencies. I urge you to support Senate Bill 48.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Stewart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kate" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Stewart".

Council Vice President Kate Stewart, District 4

# **Minority Chiefs Alliance of MD Support**

Uploaded by: Lynwood Alston

Position: FAV



**Calvin J. Washington Sr.**  
*President*  
**Anthony Ayers**  
*Vice President*  
**Anthony N. Rease,**  
*Secretary*  
**Linwood Alston**  
*Treasurer*  
**Stanford A. Moore Jr.**  
*Executive Member At Large*  
**Darryl Morgan**  
*Sgt and Arms*

---

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

**Subject: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 48 – Chief Linwood Alston**

Honorable Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am Chief Linwood Alston, the Treasurer of the Minority Chiefs' Alliance of Maryland and the Chief of Police for the City of Mount Rainier. I come before you today to express my strong support for Senate Bill 48.

One of the key reasons for endorsing this bill is the potential enrichment of law enforcement agencies through the inclusion of permanent residents as police officers. Permanent residents as police officers may possess a deeper connection and understanding of immigrant communities, fostering enhanced community engagement and communication. This dynamic can contribute to a sense of trust and legitimacy between law enforcement and diverse populations.

In regions grappling with shortages of qualified candidates for law enforcement positions, allowing permanent residents to apply can serve as a strategic solution to staffing challenges, particularly in areas with a high demand for law enforcement services.

Permanent residents that are honorably discharged veterans, and who meet necessary qualifications and training standards can bring valuable skills to law enforcement. Their expertise, language proficiency, and unique perspectives may enhance the overall effectiveness of the police force, and community policing.

A police force that mirrors the diversity of the community it serves may be better equipped to address a wide range of issues.



**Calvin J. Washington Sr.**

*President*

**Anthony Ayers**

*Vice President*

**Anthony N. Rease,**

*Secretary*

**Linwood Alston**

*Treasurer*

**Stanford A. Moore Jr.**

*Executive Member At Large*

**Darryl Morgan**

*Sgt and Arms*

Allowing permanent residents to serve as police officers not only encourages a sense of belonging and integration within society but also provides a pathway for individuals to demonstrate their commitment to the community while pursuing legal pathways to citizenship.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 48 represents a significant step towards fostering a more inclusive, diverse, and effective law enforcement community. I urge you to support this crucial legislation for the betterment of our communities and the advancement of public safety in the State of Maryland.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Linwood C. Alston

Treasurer

Minority Chiefs' Alliance of Maryland

# **GA24 Testimony in Support of SB48\_MCPD.pdf**

Uploaded by: Marcus Jones

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

Marc Elrich  
County Executive

Marcus G. Jones  
Chief of Police

Statement of Chief Marcus Jones  
Montgomery County Department of Police

In Support of SB 48  
*Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission –  
Police Officer Certification – Eligibility (Freedom to Serve Act)*

Judiciary Committee  
January 25, 2024

Members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for considering my testimony regarding this proposed legislation. I am Chief Marcus Jones with the Montgomery County Department of Police. I am testifying in favor of the SB 48 bill introduced this year by Senator Cheryl Kagan. SB 48 serves to expand the Freedom to Serve Act HB 0433 by removing the latter portion of the provision that an honorably discharged Military veteran, who is a non-citizen, can apply to become a Maryland Police Officer ONLY when they are in the process of becoming a citizen.

The Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) determines best practices regarding hiring qualifications. Over the decades, these requirements have evolved, reflecting social and cultural norms. In 2019, the General Assembly included honorably discharged non-citizens into the eligibility field for Maryland Law Enforcement. The law has enabled non-citizen residents with honorable military service across the state of Maryland to apply for the position of Police Officer. The additional provision passed in 2019 that the applicant *is in the process they become a citizen* was intended to serve as an extra layer of protection for your constituents but restricted the number of potential applicants.

Law Enforcement Agencies can always adopt stricter hiring standards but need to expand the standards set by the MPTSC. Adding the provision of needing to be in the process of becoming a US Citizen excluded a percentage of non-citizens from applying. SB 48 seeks to rectify this provision.

In addition to seeking patient candidates to provide quality customer service and listening skills, police agencies also emphasize candidates who mirror the community they will serve.

Recruiting high-quality police candidates has been made more difficult in recent years. There is well-documented data to support that there are fewer individuals in today's workforce and this trend will not change in the coming years. Law enforcement agencies continue to experience challenges in recruiting well-qualified individuals willing to serve their community as law enforcement officers.

Chief J. Thomas Manger Public Safety Headquarters - 100 Edison Park Drive Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov) - [ChiefMCPD@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:ChiefMCPD@montgomerycountymd.gov)

[montgomerycountymd.gov/311](http://montgomerycountymd.gov/311)



301-251-4850 TTY

Candidates from our armed forces have proven to adapt to the roles of guardians in our communities serving as police officers and have made tremendous contributions. We should trust those who protect us and trust those in leadership to choose the best candidates to serve in our communities and this provision will boost the servant ranks.

SB 48 will further expand the population in our community who can be considered as candidates to be law enforcement officers – permanent legal residents who have been honorably discharged from the U.S. armed forces. These members have already enlisted in the U.S. Military and served honorably to protect our country. Their spirit and willingness to serve are unquestioned. Regardless of citizenship, applicants must pass a rigorous background check, perform the physical requirements, communicate effectively, and complete all academic training requirements.

In short, this good legislation will provide additional opportunities for law enforcement agencies to recruit qualified, diverse applicants when law enforcement agencies face a continued decline in applicants.

Thank you for your time.

Chief J. Thomas Manger Public Safety Headquarters - 100 Edison Park Drive Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov) - [ChiefMCPD@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:ChiefMCPD@montgomerycountymd.gov)

[montgomerycountymd.gov/311](http://montgomerycountymd.gov/311)



301-251-4850 TTY

# **Senator Kagan Testimony SB48 Freedom to Serve.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sen. Cheryl Kagan

Position: FAV

CHERYL C. KAGAN  
Legislative District 17  
Montgomery County

Vice Chair

Education, Energy, and  
the Environment Committee



Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Suite 2 West  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
301-858-3134 · 410-841-3134  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3134  
Fax 301-858-3665 · 410-841-3665  
Cheryl.Kagan@senate.state.md.us

Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee

Joint Committee on Federal Relations

## THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### MD Police Training & Standards - Eligibility: "Freedom to Serve" (SB48)

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee: January 24, 2024, 2:30pm

Maryland has a public safety crisis.

Police departments are facing challenges in recruiting new officers. As of November 2023, the Baltimore City Police Department instituted mandatory overtime to fill shifts, and they saw a 79% resignation or retirement rate.<sup>1</sup> The Montgomery County Police Department is short 175 officers as of this month.<sup>2</sup> The Prince George's County Police Department was down by at least 300 officers less than six months ago.<sup>3</sup>

Inadequate recruitment means more crime, longer working hours, and ultimately an untenable environment for officers and their communities. [SB48](#) ("Freedom to Serve") addresses this pressing issue.

The bill allows police departments to hire honorably discharged veterans who are Legal Permanent Residents. These individuals are foreign-born people who:

- Lawfully entered the United States;
- Have obtained a work permit and a Social Security Number;
- Pay taxes; and
- Put their lives on the line for our country.

Maryland is falling behind. 13 politically varied states (CA, CO, HI, IL, LA, ME, ND, OK, TN, UT, VT, WA, and WV) allow honorably discharged Legal Permanent Residents to apply for their police forces.<sup>4</sup> SB48 would improve the diversity of our police departments, increasing the ethnic and linguistic range of our officers, and thereby improving communication with minority communities. According to the recent Census, about 15% of Maryland's population is foreign-born,<sup>5</sup> demonstrating the growing need to have a more representative pool of officers.

"Freedom to Serve" is a reintroduction of [SB126](#), which passed the House in 2023. As suggested by the Maryland Military Coalition, active and honorably discharged veterans of the National Guard and the Reserve Components of the U.S. Armed Forces are included.

The crisis in health care staffing was addressed by similar legislation last year ([SB187](#)) that allowed immigrants to obtain health care licensure.

SB48 creates more opportunity for trained, disciplined, patriotic individuals to join our police forces.

**I urge a favorable report on SB48.**

<sup>1</sup> Abell, Jeff. "Baltimore Police Union Sounds Alarm over Severe Staffing Shortages and Mandatory Overtime." WBFF, November 13, 2023.

<https://foxbaltimore.com/news/city-in-crisis/baltimore-police-union-sounds-alarm-over-severe-staffing-shortages-and-mandatory-overtime>.

<sup>2</sup> Shahzad, Maryam. "Police Department down 175 Officers; County Hiring Firm to Help Recruitment." Montgomery Community Media, January 10, 2024.

<https://www.mymcmedia.org/police-department-down-175-officers-county-hiring-firm-to-help-recruitment/>.

<sup>3</sup> Colton, Emma. "Maryland Police Department Turns to Island Territory as Search for Recruits Turns Desperate." Fox News, September 19, 2023.

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/maryland-police-department-turns-island-territory-search-recruits-turns-desperate>.

<sup>4</sup> "Background: Jurisdictions Permitting LPR Hiring." Law Enforcement Immigration Task Force, August 17, 2021.

<https://leitf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/LPR-Hiring-Of-Law-Enforcement.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> "Immigrants in Maryland." American Immigration Council, August 6, 2020. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-maryland>.

## **Written Testimony**

Uploaded by: Tyahna Arnold

Position: FAV



January 24, 2024

**Bill: SB 48: Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission - Police Officer Certification - Eligibility**

**Position:** Support

The City of Gaithersburg writes to support SB48 – Police Training and Standards Commission– Police Officer Certification-Eligibility. If enacted, this legislation would authorize a local government to allow non-citizens and permanent legal residents to become police officers. This bill establishes necessary measures for expanding law enforcement presence within communities which will create a positive impact on the lives of Maryland residents and boost the economy while creating more jobs.

We believe that this bill is a significant step towards better constituent services that will provide positive outcomes of community policing in our Maryland communities. Officers from different backgrounds can relate to and understand the diverse needs and concerns of various communities, fostering positive relationship. The expansion of a diverse law enforcement task force will help local governments to better monitor and fairly enforce regulations, ultimately promoting a peaceful living environment. Moreover, the establishment of diversity and inclusion in our law enforcement system will better represent our diverse communities. Allowing non-citizens and legal permanent residents to serve and provide necessary safeguards to ensure that the law is enforced fairly and accurately.

This bill is also crucial for the integrity and well-being of Maryland residents, as diversity and inclusion in our law enforcement has been linked to enhanced cultural competence and reduced bias and stereotyping. The provisions in SB48 will enable local governments to better control and monitor the sources of diverse issues and providing a safer and more comfortable living environment for residents of all backgrounds.

City of Gaithersburg • 31 South Summit Avenue, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877-2038  
301-258-6300 • FAX 301-948-6149 • [cityhall@gaithersburgmd.gov](mailto:cityhall@gaithersburgmd.gov) • [gaithersburgmd.gov](http://gaithersburgmd.gov)

---

MAYOR  
Jud Ashman

COUNCIL MEMBERS  
Neil Harris  
Lisa Henderson  
Yamil Hernández  
Jim McNulty  
Robert Wu

CITY MANAGER  
Tanisha R. Briley

We know this legislation will take a significant step towards community trust, economic mobility, and an increase in community engagement in Maryland communities. Therefore, we respectfully request a favorable report on SB48. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 301-466-5350 or our government relations consultant, Therese Hessler, at [therese@ashlargr.com](mailto:therese@ashlargr.com). We appreciate your support.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jud Ashman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jud Ashman, Mayor  
City of Gaithersburg

# **SB48 Freedom to Serve Bill 1-24-2024.pdf**

Uploaded by: Victor Brito

Position: FAV



111 Maryland Avenue | Rockville, Maryland 20850-2364 | 240-314-5000  
[www.rockvillemd.gov](http://www.rockvillemd.gov)

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
January 24, 2024**

**Subject:** SB48– “Freedom to Serve” Support

**From:** Victor V. Brito, Chief of Police

Chair and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, I am Victor Brito, Chief of Police of the Rockville City Police Department. The Rockville City Police Department serves approximately 70,000 residents in the City of Rockville and is the county seat for Montgomery County and its largest municipality. The Rockville City Police Department is a 67-member sworn agency who is committed to providing effective, fair, impartial, and unbiased community policing that serves the expectations of the law and community members who call the City of Rockville home. Our agency is committed to building and maintaining trust, in partnership with the Rockville community.

The Rockville City Police Department supports SB48 because one of the most significant crises in the history of American law enforcement is the hiring and retention of qualified police officers. Not only locally, regionally, and nationally, this hiring crisis has affected police agencies throughout the State of Maryland. Agencies, like the Rockville City Police Department, must be able to look at other methods to attract and hire qualified individuals who are willing and able to serve as law enforcement officers. The passing of SB48 will increase the pool of police officer applicants as well as provide the much-needed diversity and skill sets needed to help continue to strengthen our partnership with our community.

The Rockville City Police Department has experienced the “Great Resignation,” because of the pandemic and the current negative stigma attached to the law enforcement policing profession. At one time our agency saw the highest number of vacancies ever experienced in the department’s history – with many officers opting to retire early or move on to careers outside of law enforcement. Our agency is in a competitive market in the DC/Metro region; however, we have thankfully been able to refill most of our open positions by thinking outside the box to attract new police officers and retain our current police officers. We strongly believe this crisis will continue for the foreseeable future as many of today’s individuals no longer have the desire to enter the policing professions as well as the continued battle for agencies to compete in the very small pool of the best and most qualified applicants.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on SB48. We respectfully urge a favorable vote. If you have any questions or need more information, please feel to contact me at [vbrito@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:vbrito@rockvillemd.gov) or 240-314-8912.

**MCPA-MSA\_SB 48-Police-Officer-Certification-SWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FWA



# Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

## Maryland Sheriffs' Association



### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair and  
Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings 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:** January 24, 2024

**RE:** **SB 48 – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Police Officer  
Certification - Eligibility**

**POSITION:** SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT SB 48 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill modifies the eligibility requirements for an individual to be certified as a police officer.

Under current law, an individual who is a permanent legal resident of the U.S. and an honorably discharged veteran of the U.S. armed forces could be certified as a police officer if the individual has applied to obtain United States citizenship and the application is still pending approval. SB 48 expands the eligible category of individuals to include the army national guard, the air national guard, or a reserve component of the United States armed forces, but also removes the requirement that the individual has applied for citizenship and the application is still pending. The removal of this phrase is concerning.

An officer, who is not a U.S. citizen, is limited to serving only in certain capacities, such as patrol or community resources officer to name a couple. This individual would not be able to serve in capacities requiring a security clearance, involvement in FBI joint task forces, or being deputized as a U.S. Marshal. The requirement to obtain citizenship and have an application pending approval was included in past legislation to address MCPA and MSA's concern that without it, it could create two different classes of officers and standards to ensure workforce and personnel issues do not result.

Maryland law enforcement agencies across the state are having difficulty recruiting officers and MCPA and MSA understands the intent of SB 48 is to assist with recruitment efforts and create greater diversity at the State and local level. While MCPA and MSA applaud the sponsor's efforts to tackle this issue, the removal of the phrase "provided that the individual has applied to obtain United State citizenship and the application is still pending approval" is problematic for an agency's longer-term operations.

MCPA and MSA respectfully requests that SB 48 be amended to remove the brackets on page two of the bill in lines 14 and 15 to still require the individual to apply for citizenship with the application still pending. This would ensure a path to place officers on equal footing.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT SB 48 WITH AMENDMENTS** and urge a **FAVORABLE** committee report as amended.

532 Baltimore Boulevard, Suite 308  
Westminster, Maryland 21157  
667-314-3216 / 667-314-3236

# **2024 SB0048 Testimony Against 2024-01-23.pdf**

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

## Testimony Against SB0048

Please vote against HB0048.

At first glance, the argument that a permanent legal resident who has honorably served or is serving honorably in our military should be eligible to become a police officer in Maryland seems reasonable.

However, this bill goes too far in removing the requirement to have applied to become a citizen of the United States and has a pending application or will be terminated if one has failed to receive citizenship (Page 2, lines 14-15 and lines 21-23).

Removing a citizenship requirement just continues the perception that being a citizen has less value as legislatures around the country at local, state and national levels continue to grant more benefits to legal and illegal residents such as reduced or free education, housing, and medical care.

Until the pending citizenship requirement is restored, please vote against this bill.

If one wants to increase the number of applicants for the police perhaps the state and local jurisdictions should offer more pay, and restore the protections from lawsuits that the police had prior to the Freddie Gray and George Floyd incidents.

Those who thought that defunding the police was a good idea are now beginning to reap the results of that action.

Alan Lang  
242 Armstrong Lane  
Pasadena, MD 21122  
410-336-9745  
[Alanlang1@verizon.net](mailto:Alanlang1@verizon.net)

# **Maryland State Police Position Paper for SB0048.pd**

Uploaded by: Joey Sybert

Position: INFO



**State of Maryland**  
**Department of State Police**  
Government Affairs Unit  
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

**POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**DATE:** January 24, 2024

**BILL NUMBER:** Senate Bill 48      **POSITION:** Letter of Information

**BILL TITLE:** Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Police Officer Certification – Eligibility

**REVIEW AND ANALYSIS**

This legislation seeks to alter the eligibility requirements for an individual to be certified by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) as a police officer. This legislation repeals a requirement for an applicant, who is a permanent legal resident of the United States and is an honorably discharged veteran of the United States armed forces, to apply for U.S. Citizenship prior to their certification as a police officer.

Under current law, the MPTSC shall certify, as a police officer, each individual who meets the standards of the Commission. The law was recently changed to allow the Commission to certify permanent legal residents of the U.S. who are honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. providing they have applied for U.S. citizenship prior to their application for certification. To date, the MPTSC has not received any applications for the certification of a permanent legal resident meeting this criterion.

This legislation seeks to repeal the citizenship requirement for certain law enforcement officers. While it appears to be a simple idea to allow a permanent legal resident of the United States who is an honorably discharged veteran of the United States armed forces, this does present some issues for police departments, especially the Department of State Police (DSP).

Background checks of the applicant can prove very difficult. Contacting references can be problematic. If the applicant is a U.S. citizen, Maryland law enforcement can either make a personal visit in the case of a Maryland resident or contact another law enforcement agency, where the applicant resided in the U.S., to assist in the process. With an applicant from a foreign country, the agency must rely on the police department of the foreign country or Interpol. The Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center uses these sources for information on foreign nationals and advised the information is not timely, and depending on the country, the information may not be reliable. Police agencies have to look beyond the person's military service when performing the background investigations for any applicant.

**State of Maryland**  
**Department of State Police**  
Government Affairs Unit  
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

**POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

If this bill becomes law, there will be limitations on the assignments these new officers can perform. According to the Department of Justice, F.B.I. and the U.S. Marshals Service, a state or local law enforcement officer may not be deputized to work on any federal task force unless they are a U.S. citizen. For example: criminal investigations in conjunction with DEA, FBI, ATF or other federal partners, typically require the U.S. Marshal to deputize troopers to participate in the investigation; during the 6 January incident at the U.S. Capitol, DSP provided 100 troopers to assist, each were deputized to execute their mission; Presidential inaugurations - Depending on the need, DSP sends up to 100 troopers to assist in security measures, each are deputized by the U.S. Marshal.

These new officers will not be authorized to receive or view classified or sensitive information from the federal government including information related to officer safety and will not be authorized to supervise anyone on a task force or work in an intelligence fusion center. These limitations will require a law enforcement agency to maintain two lists for every assignment, transfer or promotion.