



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