



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.