



## 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.