

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2025 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 1361  
 Judiciary

(Delegate Bhandari)

**Public Safety - Law Enforcement Agencies - Standardized Report Writing System (Maryland Statewide Law Enforcement Report Writing Standardization Act)**

This bill requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) to establish and maintain a “standardized report writing system” (SRWS) for law enforcement agencies. The bill establishes requirements for SRWS and requires MPTSC to (1) provide training to law enforcement personnel on the use of SRWS; (2) develop a transition plan to assist each law enforcement agency; (3) report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the progress and effectiveness of SRWS; and (4) establish a related compliance monitoring unit. Each law enforcement agency must, among other things, (1) transition to SRWS within 18 months and (2) discontinue the use of any other report writing system, except as specified. The State may fund training programs and technical support, and law enforcement agencies may seek additional funding through federal grants or partnerships. The Governor is encouraged to include an appropriation in the annual budget bill for the establishment and implementation of SRWS.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase significantly, likely by *at least* \$100.0 million over multiple years, for MPTSC to develop SRWS, as discussed below. This estimate does not include significant *additional* costs for MPTSC and for State law enforcement agencies to transition to SRWS. To the extent State law enforcement agencies receive federal (or other) grant revenues, the need for general funds decreases.

**Local Effect:** Significant increase in expenditures for local law enforcement agencies to transition to and implement SRWS. To the extent local law enforcement agencies receive federal (or other) grant revenues, the need for local-sourced funds decreases. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal or none.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** “Standardized report writing system” means a centralized digital platform to allow for uniform data collection, reporting, and sharing across all jurisdictions within the State for law enforcement.

*Intent of the General Assembly:* The bill establishes the intent of the General Assembly to establish a uniform SRWS for all law enforcement agencies in the State to enhance the collaboration and exchange of information between law enforcement agencies, improve data accuracy, and ensure efficient resource use in criminal investigations and reporting.

*System Establishment and Requirements:* MPTSC must establish and maintain an SRWS that meets the operational needs of each law enforcement agency. SRWS must (1) comply with federal and State data privacy laws; (2) allow for real-time data sharing, analytics, and interoperability; and (3) allow members of the public to securely access and download reports with appropriate safeguards to protect sensitive information.

MPTSC must use the Maryland Automated Accident Reporting System (MAARS) for documenting automobile accidents as a model for SRWS.

*Training and Implementation:* MPTSC must (1) provide initial and ongoing training to law enforcement personnel on the use of SRWS and (2) develop a transition plan, including technical support and resource allocation, to assist each law enforcement agency during the implementation period for SRWS. Each law enforcement agency must designate a liaison officer to coordinate with MPTSC on SRWS implementation and training.

Each law enforcement agency must (1) transition to SRWS within 18 months after implementation of the system and (2) discontinue the use of any other report writing system unless it is integrated within SRWS.

*Funding:* The State may fund training programs and technical support for implementation of SRWS, and law enforcement agencies may seek additional funding through federal grants or partnerships. The Governor is encouraged to include an appropriation in the annual budget bill for the establishment and implementation of SRWS.

*Compliance Monitoring and Corrective Action Plans:* MPTSC must establish a compliance monitoring unit to (1) ensure each law enforcement agency implements and uses SRWS and (2) conduct periodic audits and provide feedback on the use and effectiveness of SRWS.

A law enforcement agency that does not implement SRWS within 18 months after implementation of the system must submit a corrective action plan to MPTSC within

30 days after any request by MPTSC. A law enforcement agency that is required to submit a corrective action plan and does not comply with the plan as required by MPTSC may have funds withheld from a fund or grant program under Title 4 of the Public Safety Article (Law Enforcement Funds and Grant Programs).

*Reporting:* Beginning October 15, 2026, and each October 15 thereafter, MPTSC must report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the progress and effectiveness of SRWS, including recommendations for system improvements and future resource needs.

**Current Law:** There is no statutory requirement for a standardized system for writing reports by law enforcement agencies.

MPTSC operates approved police training schools and prescribes standards for and certifies schools that offer police and security training. In consultation and cooperation with various entities, it also sets minimum qualifications for instructors and certifies qualified instructors for approved training schools.

MPTSC certifies persons as police officers who have met commission standards, including submission to (1) a criminal history records check; (2) a specified mental health screening; and (3) a specified physical agility assessment. An individual who is not satisfactorily trained in the 12-month probationary period may not be employed as a police officer, and a police officer may not serve after certification has been revoked, suspended, or allowed to lapse.

### **State/Local Fiscal Effect:**

#### *System Development*

General fund expenditures increase significantly, likely by *at least* \$100.0 million over multiple fiscal years, for MPTSC to develop, test, and establish SRWS in accordance with the bill's requirements. This minimum estimate is based on information provided by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and the Department of State Police (DSP) and reflects the agencies' experience with converting from MAARS (a paper-based system) to the Automated Crash Reporting System (ACRS) (a completely electronic system) in 2015. The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) does not have the technical expertise to independently verify the estimate. Also, the estimate does not include any costs for any additional staff that may be needed to gather information from law enforcement agencies to help develop the system to meet the needs of each law enforcement agency; such costs are likely significant.

The State paid approximately \$34.1 million to develop ACRS beginning in calendar 2010; however, ACRS is designed to only track information relating to automotive accidents. In

order to meet the bill's requirements, MPTSC needs to build SRWS to meet the operational needs of the 156 law enforcement agencies within the State. In addition, as noted above, the system must (1) comply with federal and State data privacy laws; (2) allow for real-time data sharing, analytics, and interoperability; and (3) allow members of the public to securely access and download reports with appropriate safeguards to protect sensitive information. According to a survey conducted by MPTSC in an effort to provide information for this analysis, Delaware is currently the only state with a statewide report management system (RMS) for law enforcement; however, that system does not meet the bill's requirements.

Over the last decade, DSP and approximately 128 other law enforcement agencies in the State have worked with the Federal Bureau of Investigation to transition to RMSs that interact with the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which tracks and shares information for the Uniform Crime Report Program. DSP spent approximately \$34.0 million to build its RMS to meet NIBRS requirements; however, the DSP system is not accessible by members of the public or other law enforcement agencies.

#### *Training, Transition, Implementation, and Maintenance*

Because of the magnitude of the requirements for SRWS and the need for MPTSC to coordinate with 156 law enforcement agencies (as required by the bill) and federal law enforcement agencies (as required to obtain federal funding and access to federal data sharing) in order to develop SRWS, it is assumed that it takes at least five years for SRWS to be developed. Accordingly, it is assumed that any costs related to training, the transition to SRWS by State and local law enforcement agencies, implementing SRWS, and maintaining SRWS likely fall outside the five-year period covered by this fiscal and policy note.

Nevertheless, once SRWS is developed, general fund expenditures for MPTSC increase significantly to hire at least 10 additional staff to (1) provide training to State and local law enforcement agencies on the use and implementation of the system; (2) staff the compliance monitoring unit; and (3) handle information technology needs, including assisting the compliance unit with audits. DPSCS's Information Technology and Communications Division also anticipates significant costs to support MPTSC in the implementation of the bill, including costs for system maintenance, help desk staff, and annual reporting.

Expenditures for State and local law enforcement agencies increase significantly to update their agency RMSs to integrate with SRWS within 18 months after implementation of SRWS. Although the overall costs to State and local law enforcement agencies is unknown, for context, DSP alone estimates that it will cost \$10.0 million to \$20.0 million – and likely take at least three years – to integrate its RMS with SRWS. (Again, DLS is not able to

independently verify this estimate.) DSP also notes that it pays \$6.0 million annually in maintenance fees for its existing system. Accordingly, costs for State and local law enforcement agencies to integrate their existing systems with SRWS and maintain them over time are significant.

To the extent that State and local law enforcement agencies are able to obtain funding through federal grants or partnerships, the need for State and local-sourced funds decreases. The extent to which State and local law enforcement agencies are able to secure any funding through federal grants or partnerships cannot be predicted.

**Additional Comments:** Although law enforcement agencies are not able to share information through their individual RMSs, information is shared through the Law Enforcement Information Exchange (LinX), which is federally funded and regulated. However, only law enforcement is able to access LinX and only for legitimate investigation purposes. It is unclear whether a single system can be created to share information among law enforcement agencies in the State and the general public while also sharing information with federal law enforcement agencies that require limited access to information.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Municipal League; Town of Bel Air; Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission; Comptroller's Office; University System of Maryland; Morgan State University; Department of Budget and Management; Department of General Services; Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Public Service Commission; Department of Legislative Services

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