

PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS OF MARYLAND

JEFFREY BUDDLE, PRESIDENT
JOHN F. QUIRK, SECRETARY TREASURER



THOMAS SKINNER, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT
MELISSA BRAGG, 2ND VICE PRESIDENT

CHARTERED 1969

February 5, 2020

Senator Guy Guzzone, Chairman
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 269 – Hometown Heroes Act of 2020 (Favorable Report)

Chairman Guzzone,

The Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland represents over 10,000 active and retired fire fighters and paramedics across the State of Maryland. On behalf of our members we strongly support Senate Bill 269 – Hometown Heroes Act of 2020 and urge the Budget & Taxation Committee to issue a **favorable report**.

Senate Bill 269 would provide an income subtraction modification for 100% of eligible retirement income phased in over two years for a qualified retired public safety employee. Additionally, SB 269 would amend the eligibility date to begin receiving these benefits to age 50.

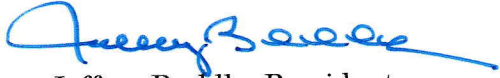
The Hometown Heroes Act was first introduced in the Maryland General Assembly in 2006. Over the years various pieces of legislation have been introduced. In 2017 the General Assembly approved legislation that provides an income subtraction modification for the first \$15,000 dollars of retirement income between the ages of 55 – 65. We believe that Senate Bill 269 provides a measured and phased in approach to expanding this benefit for qualified retired public safety employees.

Public Safety employees covered under the current law and by the proposed legislation protect the citizens of the State of Maryland 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. These employees serve the citizens during careers that span between 20 – 30 years with some being even longer. All too often, upon retirement, these individuals move out of Maryland to other states because these states have more favorable tax provisions on retirement income.

We would like to acknowledge and thank Governor Larry Hogan for introducing this important piece of legislation as part of his Administration package. If adopted by the General Assembly, this would put Maryland in a much better position with neighboring states and provide an incentive for retired public safety employees to remain in the state in which they faithfully served the community over the course of their careers.

On behalf of all the members of the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland we strongly support Senate Bill 269 and urge the Budget & Taxation Committee to issue a **favorable report.**

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Buddle, President
Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland