

BUDDLE_FAV_SB269

Uploaded by: Buddle, Jeff

Position: FAV

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Buddle", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey Buddle, President
Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland

AFT_FAV_SB269

Uploaded by: English, Marietta

Position: FAV

Marietta English
PRESIDENT

Kenya Campbell
SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
February 5, 2020
SB 269 - Income Tax Subtraction Modification - Hometown Heroes**

SUPPORT

Chair Guzzone and members of the committee – on behalf of the 20,000 members of the American Federation of Teachers – Maryland (AFT-Maryland), we ask for a favorable report on SB 269 - Income Tax Subtraction Modification - Hometown Heroes. This is an important bill for workers because it will help ensure a secure and dignified retirement, to recruit and retain correctional officers, and put money back into the state and local communities.

Correctional officers, police and fire fighters, cannot be expected to stay on the job into their 60s. The physical, mental and emotional toils of the job, often requires them to retire earlier than most other professions. This can leave a tremendous financial burden on our Hometown Heroes and their families, and can lead to a less dignified retirement.

In addition, it is getting more difficult to recruit and retain good officers. Competitive salaries and benefits are needed to keep good people on the job in our state. The long term cost of this bill could be offset by the immediate funds needed to recruit and train new personnel.

Finally, keeping retirees in the state after retirement is important. Their contributions to communities are needed. The money the retirees save on taxes would be pumped back into the local economies. According to the National Institute of Retirement Security, for every \$1 a retiree spends it creates \$1.98 in economic activity¹.

Thank you for your time. We urge a favorable report on SB 269.

Mariette English
President

¹ National Institute on Retirement Security: Pensionomics 2014
(http://www.nirsonline.org/storage/nirs/documents/Pensionomics%202014/pensionomics2014_final.pdf)

SB 269_Inc Tax Sub CO's_FAV

Uploaded by: Esty, Sue

Position: FAV



190 West Ostend St., #201
Baltimore, MD 21230
Phone: 410.547.1515
Fax: 410.837.5436

Patrick Moran - President

Testimony

SB 269 – Income Tax Subtraction Modification – Correctional Officers, Law Enforcement Officers, and Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services Personnel

AFSCME supports SB 269. We represent Correctional Officers and Juvenile Services employees who would be impacted by this legislation.

This legislation would allow a qualified individual to become eligible for the income tax subtraction to retirees between the ages of 50 and 54. This is important because the Correctional Officer Retirement System allows retirement after 20 years. While few take advantage of this shorter retirement eligibility time, having it available would at least bring the income tax subtraction in line with the potential retirement by age 50.

Correctional Officers and Juvenile Service employees in comparable positions put their lives on the line every day. They endure short-staffing, rough treatment by inmates, and incredibly long hours caused by mandatory overtime. Studies have shown that their life span is shorter than average as a result of the stresses of their job.

For these reasons we urge you to support SB 269.

Every AFSCME Maryland State and University contract guarantees a right to union representation.
An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.
800.492.1996

Find us: afscmemd.org
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StMarysCommissioners_FAV_SB0269

Uploaded by: Guy, James

Position: FAV

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
**COMMISSIONERS OF
ST. MARY'S COUNTY**



James R. Guy, President
Eric Colvin, Commissioner
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner
Todd B. Morgan, Commissioner
John E. O'Connor, Commissioner

Senate Bill 269

Income Tax Subtraction Modification – Correctional
Officers, Law Enforcement Officers and Fire, Rescue and
Emergency Services Personnel (Hometown Heroes Act)

Hearing: February 5, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

SUPPORT

January 28, 2020

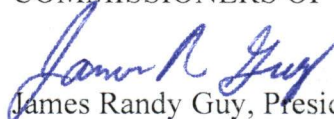
The Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone, Chairman
Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Guzzone:

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County SUPPORT Senate Bill 269 - Income Tax Subtraction Modification – Correctional Officers, Law Enforcement Officers and Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Personnel (Hometown Heroes Act) which is being heard on February 5, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. in the Budget and Taxation Committee.

St. Mary's County believes the incentive to assist Correctional Officers at retirement is well deserved and earned for serving their communities and therefore, we SUPPORT the introduction of this legislation and believe this legislation would benefit the citizens of St. Mary's County. We look forward to working with you on this and other initiatives throughout the session.

Sincerely,
COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY


James Randy Guy, President

CSMC/AB/sf
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Page 2

The Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone, Chairman
January 28, 2020

Cc: Senator Jack Bailey Delegate Matthew Morgan
 Delegate Gerald Clark
 Delegate Brian Crosby
 Commissioner Eric Colvin
 Commissioner Michael Hewitt
 Commissioner Todd Morgan
 Commissioner John O'Connor
 Dr. Rebecca Bridgett, County Administrator
 David Weiskopf, County Attorney

DPSCS_SUPP_SB0269

Uploaded by: kahl, catherine

Position: FAV



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of the Secretary Office of Government and Legislative Affairs

45 Calvert Street, Suite B7A-C, Annapolis MD 21401
410-260-6070 • Fax: 410-974-2586 • www.dpscs.state.md.us

STATE OF MARYLAND

LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
LT. GOVERNOR

ROBERT L. GREEN
SECRETARY

RACHEL SESSA
CHIEF OF STAFF

CHRISTOPHER McCULLY
DEPUTY SECRETARY
ADMINISTRATION

J. MICHAEL ZEIGLER
DEPUTY SECRETARY
OPERATIONS

CAROLYN J. SCRUGGS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

GARY W. McLHINNEY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

CATHERINE KAHL
ACTING DIRECTOR

BILL: SENATE BILL 269

POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION: This bill expands the State income tax subtraction modification for retired law enforcement; correctional officers; and fire, rescue, or emergency services personnel by exempting 100% of eligible retirement income, phased in over two years and extending eligibility to retirees who are between age 50 and 54.

COMMENTS:

- The Department's Division of Correction operates approximately 17 State correctional facilities which house offenders sentenced to incarceration for 18 months and longer. The Department also runs the Baltimore City Jail, which houses pretrial detainees and inmates sentenced to incarceration for 18 months and less.
- The Hometown Heroes Act of 2018 provided tax relief, in the form of a subtraction modification to retired law enforcement, fire or rescue and emergency services personnel, including medical technicians and paramedics.
- This bill expands the State income tax subtraction modification for retired law enforcement; correctional officers; and fire, rescue, or emergency services personnel exempting 100% of eligible retirement income beginning in tax year 2021.
- The Department has over 5,500 dedicated correctional officers, working in 21 correctional facilities across the state. Correctional officers and their chain of command are tasked with the care, custody and control of over 20,000 inmates and detainees.
- Correctional officers, along with law enforcement and emergency services personnel are dedicated to ensuring public safety. The Department is supportive of this income tax subtraction modification.

CONCLUSION: For these reasons, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests the Committee to vote **FAVORABLE** on Senate Bill 269

MCPA-MSA_SB269 Hometown Heroes_Support

Uploaded by: Mansfield, Andrea

Position: FAV



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chairman and
Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Chief David Morris, Co-Chair, MCPA, Joint Legislative Committee
Sheriff Darren Popkin, Co-Chair, MSA, Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 5, 2020

RE: **SB 269 Income Tax Subtraction Modification – Correctional Officers, Law Enforcement Officers, and Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Personnel (Hometown Heroes Act)**

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) SUPPORT SB 269. This bill exempts law enforcement, fire, rescue, corrections, and emergency response personnel from state tax on all retirement income specific to their service in those professions and lowers the age of eligibility from 55 to 50.

Regardless of the agency or uniform worn, the men and women of law enforcement and public safety have stepped forward on behalf of the citizens of their communities and of our State. Each one has taken an oath, a promise, to put the well-being of others first. As we have seen all too often, these professionals put their lives and safety on the line each shift they work, many being asked to make the ultimate sacrifice. This legislation recognizes and honors the sacrifice of public safety officers. MCPA and MSA believe this is warranted and appropriate considering the dangerous work these individuals perform throughout their careers and their dedication to service to and protection of the public.

For this reason, MCPA and MSA SUPPORT SB 269 and urge a FAVORABLE Committee report.

BCFPE_FAV_SB269

Uploaded by: Ripley, John

Position: FAV



BALTIMORE COUNTY
FEDERATION OF
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
AFT / AFL - CIO / BCFPE Local #4883

John Ripley
BCFPE President
305 W. Chesapeake Ave., Suite L-30
Towson, Maryland 21204-4841
Ph: 410-296-1875
Fax: 410-296-1879

February 5, 2020

RE: FAVORABLE- SB269: Income Tax Subtraction Modification - Correctional Officers, Law Enforcement Officers, and Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Personnel (Hometown Heroes Act)

Chairman Guzzone and Honorable Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

My name is John Ripley and I am the President of The Baltimore County Federation of Public Employees who represent approximately 500 active and retired Correctional Officers in Baltimore County. Over the years we have witnessed these hard-working men and women perform countless acts of sacrifice and bravery. As Correctional Officers these men and women perform the difficult tasks that a police officer, paramedic, firefighter, social worker and a psychologist does daily. Keeping these public safety minded citizens in your communities is beneficial to all people who live in those communities. This decrease in the age a resident to become eligible from 55 to 50 years old is much needed for our retired Correctional Officers. This age change is crucial in insuring that retired residents from Maryland stay in Maryland instead of changing residence to a more tax friendly state.

Because of this we urge you to support SB269. This is a much-needed addition to the subtraction modification and is much needed for our retiring Correctional Officers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John Ripley", followed by a long horizontal line.

President John Ripley

Baltimore County Federation of Public Employees Local #4883



BALTIMORE COUNTY
FEDERATION OF
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
AFT / AFL - CIO / BCFPE Local #4883

John Ripley
BCFPE President
305 W. Chesapeake Ave., Suite L-30
Towson, Maryland 21204-4841
Ph: 410-296-1875
Fax: 410-296-1879

February 5, 2020

RE: FAVORABLE- SB269: Income Tax Subtraction Modification - Correctional Officers, Law Enforcement Officers, and Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Personnel (Hometown Heroes Act)

Chairman Guzone and Honorable Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

My name is Adam Hendrix and I am the Executive President of The Baltimore County Federation of Public Employees who represent approximately 500 active and retired Correctional Officers in Baltimore County. I am also a Correctional Sergeant at the Baltimore County Department of Corrections. Over the years we have witnessed these hard-working men and women perform countless acts of sacrifice and bravery. As Correctional Officers these men and women perform the difficult tasks that a police officer, paramedic, firefighter, social worker and a psychologist does daily. Keeping these public safety minded citizens in your communities is beneficial to all people who live in those communities. This decrease in the age a resident to become eligible from 55 to 50 years old is much needed for our retired Correctional Officers. This age change is critical in keeping retirees right here in Maryland where they can put money back in the Maryland economy

Because of this we urge you to support HB350. This is a much-needed addition to the subtraction modification and is much needed for our retiring Correctional Officers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam E. Hendrix".

Executive Vice President Adam Hendrix

Baltimore County Federation of Public Employees Local #4883

RUEHL_FAV_SB269

Uploaded by: Ruehl, Richard

Position: FAV



**HOWARD COUNTY PROFESSIONAL
FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION
I.A.F.F. LOCAL 2000**

5397 TWIN KNOLLS ROAD • SUITE 16 • COLUMBIA, MD 21045

TO: The Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair
Members, Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

FROM: Richard L. Ruehl, President
Howard County Professional Fire Fighters Association

DATE: February 5, 2020

RE: SUPPORT – Senate Bill 269 – Income Tax Subtraction Modification - Correctional
Officers, Law Enforcement Officers, and Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Personnel
(Hometown Heroes Act of 2020)

The Howard County Professional Fire Fighters Association, representing more than 400 active and retired professional fire fighters and paramedics who proudly serve the citizens of Howard County, Maryland, fully support Senate Bill 269.

Fire fighters put their lives on the line every day protecting lives and property throughout our State. While our members enjoy long careers protecting the communities they serve, too many move out of Maryland once they reach retirement to take advantage of the tax breaks they receive from other nearby states.

Pennsylvania is one of the most generous states in the nation when it comes to offering income tax exclusions on a wide variety of retirement income. Pennsylvania does not tax Social Security or any eligible pension plan. Furthermore, it does not tax distributions from 401(K), deferred compensation plans, or other retirement accounts.

Making our state as welcoming and friendly as possible to retirees is simply the right thing to do.

After years of our members retiring out state, eliminating income tax on service-related retirement benefits would be a great step to ensuring that the people who spend their lives in service to others are given the support and tax relief that they deserve to stay and retire in Maryland.

On behalf of the members of the Howard County Professional Fire Fighters Association, we encourage a favorable report on Senate Bill 269.

Submitted respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard L. Ruehl". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Richard L. Ruehl, President
IAFF Local 2000

SULLIVAN_FAV_SB269

Uploaded by: Sullivan, Cara

Position: FAV



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE
100 STATE CIRCLE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1925
(410) 974-3901
(TOLL FREE) 1-800-811-8336

TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

Senate Bill 269 - Income Tax Subtraction Modification - Correctional Officers, Law Enforcement Officers, Fire, rescue, and Emergency Services Personnel (Hometown Heroes Act)

**Budget and Taxation Committee
February 6, 2020**

Cara Sullivan, Deputy Legislative Officer, Governor's Office

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

Senate Bill 269 expands Maryland's existing hometown heroes subtraction modification by exempting 100% of retirement income earned as a result of employment as a law enforcement officer, fire, rescue, or emergency services personnel, or correctional officer. Senate Bill 269 also proposes to lower the eligibility age from 55 to 50. The legislation is phased in over two years, beginning with tax year 2020.

Current law provides individuals age 55 and older a subtraction modification for the first \$15,000 of retirement income earned as a result of the individual's employment as a law enforcement officer, or fire, rescue or emergency services personnel of the United States, the State, or a political subdivision of the State.

Allowing those who put their lives on the line for our protection to exempt the retirement income they've earned will make our State a better place for our hometown heroes to live, work, and retire. Not only is this the right thing to do, it will help attract these valuable professionals to our state.

The Administration appreciates the leadership and commitment of this Committee and the General Assembly in providing these hard-earned benefits to our public safety professionals and looks forward to continuing to work together to expand the subtraction modification.

For these reasons, the Administration respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 269.

SULLIVAN_FAV_SB269

Uploaded by: Sullivan, Cara

Position: FAV



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE
100 STATE CIRCLE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1925
(410) 974-3901
(TOLL FREE) 1-800-811-8336

TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

Senate Bill 269 - Income Tax Subtraction Modification - Correctional Officers, Law Enforcement Officers, Fire, rescue, and Emergency Services Personnel (Hometown Heroes Act)

**Budget and Taxation Committee
February 6, 2020**

Cara Sullivan, Deputy Legislative Officer, Governor's Office

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

Senate Bill 269 expands Maryland's existing hometown heroes subtraction modification by exempting 100% of retirement income earned as a result of employment as a law enforcement officer, fire, rescue, or emergency services personnel, or correctional officer. Senate Bill 269 also proposes to lower the eligibility age from 55 to 50. The legislation is phased in over two years, beginning with tax year 2020.

Current law provides individuals age 55 and older a subtraction modification for the first \$15,000 of retirement income earned as a result of the individual's employment as a law enforcement officer, or fire, rescue or emergency services personnel of the United States, the State, or a political subdivision of the State.

Allowing those who put their lives on the line for our protection to exempt the retirement income they've earned will make our State a better place for our hometown heroes to live, work, and retire. Not only is this the right thing to do, it will help attract these valuable professionals to our state.

The Administration appreciates the leadership and commitment of this Committee and the General Assembly in providing these hard-earned benefits to our public safety professionals and looks forward to continuing to work together to expand the subtraction modification.

For these reasons, the Administration respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 269.

FODCOP_ FAV _SB296

Uploaded by: Waldroff, Dale

Position: FAV

***FRATERNAL ORDER of DETENTION
CENTER OFFICERS and PERSONNEL***

***P.O. BOX 6645
Annapolis, MD 21401***

Testimony In Support of Senate Bill 0269
Income Tax-Subtraction Modification-Correctional Officers, Law Enforcement Officers,
and Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Personnel (Hometown Heroes Act)
5 February, 2020

To: The Honorable Chair: Senator Guy Guzzone, and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
From: Dale Waldroff: Legislative Director - Fraternal Order of Anne Arundel County Detention Center Officers
& Personnel – (FODCOP)

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

As a Correctional Officer, a Union Member and a Union Leader in Anne Arundel County, I rise to ask that you support this piece of positive legislation, The Hometown Heroes Act. Far too few of my fellow Officers can afford to live in the very County that they work. Some must even live outside of our state's borders. Even fewer of these Officers work a full term to be eligible for a retirement check. Of those that do retire, the great majority move out of the Great State of Maryland. They move mainly because of Maryland's tax rate. If you add in the other 22 counties as well as those correctional

Maryland has a tax rate ranging from 2 percent up to 5.75 percent for those making \$250,001 or higher. The majority of those affected by House Bill 61 would fall in the 4.75 bracket with some senior ranks possibly falling in the 5 percent bracket. In addition to the state income tax, each of Maryland's twenty-three counties and Baltimore City levy additional income taxes ranging from 1.75 percent to 3.20 percent of taxable income. The average is approximately 2.9 percent.

Senate Bill 269 would help retain many of those retirement eligible officers who are considering leaving our state for states with a better tax rate. As a transplant from Western North Carolina, I recognize that Maryland is a beautiful and bountiful state that has so much to offer its citizens. From beaches to mountains, state of the art medical facilities to technological advancement in sciences, schools, colleges, and universities that can rival practically anywhere in the world. These are all part of what makes Maryland so great to live and work in.

However, it is the taxation from both the state and local municipality that drive so many of our retirement eligible officers out of state. By retaining those retirees, the state is also retaining the families of those retirees. This means that those family members who work in the state, to include many of the retirees who pick up secondary employment, are paying income tax on those wages. On top of that they will be paying taxes on Property and Real Estate, Capital Gains, Estate Entertainment, Excise Taxes not including the various User Fees.

I recognize that as a legislator, you must look at the front end and consider what the cost of gradually making pensions for correctional officer's state income tax free by the year 2022 will be. I would surmise that it is a large number to look at. I would also ask you consider what the state would be gaining on the back end when more people choose to stay here in the state. They and their families would pay taxes that would otherwise be spent elsewhere in other states.

According to the Fiscal and Policy Note that was submitted on 3 February, 2020; the impact to state revenue would reflect a decrease of \$6.6 Million and a decrease to local revenue of \$4.4 Million with either minimal to no impact on small business.

What is not reflected within the fiscal and policy note? What is the impact on both the State and the Local revenues, when one subtracts the combined taxes and money that would otherwise be spent by the retiree and their family when they leave Maryland for other tax friendly states such as Florida or Tennessee where there is No State Income Tax?

Senate Bill 269 will only help our state and our correctional officers as well as the institutions they serve when one considers the retention issues faced by the State Department of Corrections and each of the county's correctional facilities. As a proud Correctional Officer and as a leader of correctional officers, Me and my members are **In Full SUPPORT** of the Income Tax-Subtraction Modification-Correctional Officers, Law Enforcement Officers, and Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Personnel (Hometown Heroes Act).

I ask you to support Senate Bill 269.

Thank You,

Dale A. Waldroff

Dale Waldroff
Legislative Director
FODCOP, Inc.
410-570-6736
Dale.waldroff@focop.org

MACo_UNF_SB0269

Uploaded by: Kinnally, Kevin

Position: UNF



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

Senate Bill 269

Income Tax - Subtraction Modification – Correctional Officers, Law Enforcement Officers, and Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services Personnel (Hometown Heroes Act)

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: February 5, 2020

From: Kevin Kinnally

Tax Incentives and Local Government Autonomy

Counties are eager and committed partners in promoting economic growth and creating opportunity – we prefer local autonomy in determining the best way locally. The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) opposes state-mandated reductions in local revenue sources, but welcomes tools to grant counties options and flexibility to pursue their own parallel tax incentives, or to develop others to suit their local needs.

The General Assembly routinely considers proposals to change tax structures, often seeking to stimulate economic growth, encourage beneficial activities, or attract and retain residents. These proposals often are focused exclusively on the state’s tax structure, but sometimes extend to local revenues as well.

In general, MACo stands for local self-determination. Counties, led by their elected leaders who are directly accountable within the community, are in the best position to make decisions on local affairs – ranging from land use to budget priorities. MACo steadfastly guards this local autonomy, and frequently advocates against statewide solutions that mandate county compliance or otherwise override local decision-making.

Property taxes show the best collaborative way to enact targeted tax relief. The State and its local governments already work together here – where the State routinely grants a state-level tax credit, but then enables county governments to enact their own as a local option.

State proposals that involve local revenue sources can be enacted as “local option” offerings, to allow counties maximum flexibility to achieve local goals. MACo urges the Committee to primarily consider state income tax credits as the best means to incorporate local tax relief as part of a broader policy. MACo and county governments stand ready to work with state policymakers to develop flexible and optional tools to create broad or targeted tax incentives, but resist state-mandated changes that preclude local input.

Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 269.