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Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees
Estates and Trusts

Government Operations and
Long Term Care

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SUPPORT HB 1197

Criminal Procedure – Pretrial Release – Assault on a Law Enforcement Officer
Police Protection Act

Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary and members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB 1197.

This bill prohibits a District Court Commissioner from authorizing the pretrial release of a defendant who is charged with assault in the first or second degree against a law enforcement officer. Under this bill, a judge may authorize the pretrial release of a defendant under the following circumstances:

- The defendant has provided suitable bail
- There are conditions that ensure the defendant will not flee
- There are conditions that ensure the defendant will not pose a danger to other individuals or the community

Public safety is important to all of our citizens in this state. This safety includes our law enforcement community, who are faced with the threat of assault daily while doing their lawful duty to protect us. Just yesterday – as we enter the middle of the session - the governor held a press conference to stress the urgency of passing violent crime-fighting bills, designed to protect our citizens and law officers. In recent years there has been an escalation of violent attacks against our law enforcement officers. Last week local, state and federal officers were struck by gunfire in Northeast Baltimore while trying to serve a warrant. Also recently, an officer was bitten on the arm and another elbowed in the eye when dispatched to a late afternoon disturbance.

In my research, according to the FBI's website, in 2018 Maryland saw 2,322 assaults on law enforcement in the line of duty, 1,231 more than Washington, D.C. and 973 more than Virginia during this time. A staggering 2,007 assaults involved a personal weapon. Fifty-one assaults involved firearms, 37 knife or other cutting items and 227 other dangerous weapons. Figures were unavailable for 2019.

It is urgent that we provide support to those men and women who put their lives on the line each day to keep our communities safe. This bill will ensure that those individuals who commit acts of violence against our officers must - at the very least - go before a judge before any pretrial release.

Thank you for your consideration.

I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report.

Delegate April Rose