



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr. Chairman and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings 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: January 21, 2021

RE: **SB 43 – Criminal Law – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Sexual Activity**

POSITION: **LETTER OF INFORMATION**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) provide the following information on SB 43. This bill expands the list of individuals a law enforcement officer is prohibited from having sexual relations. Under this bill it includes a victim, witness, or suspect during the course of an investigation that the law enforcement officer is conducting, supervising, or assisting with; and a person requesting assistance from or responding to the law enforcement officer in the course of the officer's official duties.

Two years ago legislation passed to criminalize sexual contact between a law enforcement officer and a person in custody. MCPA and MSA worked on this legislation with the committee, sponsor, and advocates, as due to the Officers authority over the in-custody individual, any sexual relations would be considered an abuse of that authority. The same is not true of victims, witnesses and others who encounter law enforcement officers. These relationships could be consensual sexual conduct between a police officer and a citizen under a variety of circumstances, potentially violating one's constitutional protection of free association.

Most importantly, law enforcement agencies do have policies and regulations to address such conduct, as well as other criminal laws that prohibit sexual misconduct. These policies and approaches should determine appropriate actions.