

Legislative Testimony 599.pdf

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Legislative Testimony:
SB599

I strongly support Senator Will Smith's Senate Bill 599 to ban the purchase of military hardware by civilian policing agencies.



By Authority: Rich Elliott For Maryland Keanuu Smith-Brown, Campaign Chair Christian Hillian, Treasurer

TESTIMONY FOR SB0599 Surplus Military Equipment -

Uploaded by: Plante, Cecilia

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TESTIMONY FOR SB0599
PUBLIC SAFETY – SURPLUS MILITARY EQUIPMENT – PROHIBITION ON PURCHASE
BY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Bill Sponsor: Senator Smith

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0599 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our Coalition members appreciate that police officers have a hard job. However, they don't need tanks, grenade launchers and other sophisticated military equipment that is designed to be used on a battlefield. Their job is to protect the peace, not make our streets into a war zone.

People should not walk around scared because of an alarming overabundance of military-grade weapons. Law enforcement personnel already have enough automatic weaponry. Let us not over-militarize our police.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

Maryland State Position Paper SB 599.pdf

Uploaded by: Williams, Thomas

Position: INFO



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Section
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: February 3, 2021

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 599 **POSITION:** Letter of Information

BILL TITLE: Public Safety – Surplus Military Equipment - Prohibition on Purchase by Law Enforcement Agencies

This legislation seeks to prohibit a law enforcement agency from obtaining certain equipment from a federal military surplus program.

Under current law, the federal government has established a federal military surplus program. Under President Obama, there were restrictions put on what items could be made available to local law enforcement. President Trump did loosen those restrictions, but some of the items this bill seeks to restrict are already restricted.

Currently, a law enforcement agency cannot request a grenade launcher and firearms silencers which are also already illegal in Maryland. Some of the other items on the list in this bill are requested by law enforcement in order to protect lives and minimize the risk of injury to law enforcement or the public. For example, an armored vehicle can be extremely effective at removing innocent persons from harm's way in an active shooter situation. The agency requesting the vehicle also has no control over whether the vehicle is armored. Many of these vehicles provide rescue operations with additional access. In the case of a flood, these vehicles are used for access in deeper standing water to rescue and remove citizens, such as flooding in Ocean City. A drone can provide a viewpoint in a volatile or dangerous situation that otherwise would put a human being at risk. (The State Fire Marshal uses drones for building inspections after a fire).

The Department is the single point of contact for the surplus military equipment acquisition program. In addition to the restrictions included in the program, the Department reviews all requests for equipment. If the equipment is on the prohibited list, the request will not be submitted. The Department provides a link on its webpage for all surplus property distributed in Maryland.

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POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION