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MARYLAND STATE LODGE
FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE[®]

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The Honorable William C. Smith Jr., Chairman
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen St. Annapolis, MD 21401 -1991

Dear Chairman Smith,

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland State Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police in opposition of Senate Bill 166 (Criminal Procedure – Police Officers – Duty to Report Misconduct (Maryland Police Accountability Act))

While the women and men of the Fraternal Order of Police have long supported reforms aimed at ensuring accountability within our ranks, we simply cannot support proposed legislation which seeks to levy excessive punitive measures upon law enforcement officers. It is clear that the sole aim of SB166 is to impose a maximum penalty of imprisonment not exceeding five (5) years, or a fine not exceeding ten-thousand dollars (\$10,000.00), or both, for officers convicted of failing to report misconduct.

While many of Maryland's law enforcement agencies have already added policies mandating a duty to report misconduct, and we are not aware of any empirical evidence to suggest that officers are failing to report the misconduct of fellow officers, this bill is attempting to take the unprecedented and inexplicable step of imposing an extreme criminal penalty for police officers.

The Fraternal Order of Police understands the importance of laws which mandate the reporting of criminal conduct. We also understand the importance of fairness and equality related to criminal penalties. Criminal penalties for Police Officers should not exceed those of other professions with a mandatory reporting requirement.

The Maryland Legislature has an opportunity to show the rest of the Country that it enacts laws that are fair for all Marylanders, including those who wear a police uniform. For these reasons, the Maryland Fraternal Order of Police must oppose SB166.

Respectfully,

William R. Milam
First Vice President

Representing the Professional Police Officers of the State of Maryland