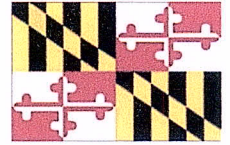




CLYDE BOATWRIGHT
STATE PRESIDENT

Maryland State Lodge FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

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KENNY SCHUBERT
SECRETARY

EARL KRATSCH
TREASURER

March 8, 2021

Senate Bill 867 Criminal Law - Hate Crimes – First Responders

Dear Chairman Smith and Distinguished Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

On behalf of the more than 20,000 courageous Women and Men of the Maryland Fraternal Order of Police, we ask for your **SUPPORT** of Senate Bill 867 Criminal Law - Hate Crimes - First Responders.

Americans have watched story after story of law enforcement officers being attacked without warning across this great country. These men and women are the most recognizable symbol of, not only, our government but also our freedoms. Over that last few years, Law Enforcement Officers have become an all too frequent target of those filled with hatred and anger. We have watched as several senseless acts of violence and vandalism have been committed against members and their property solely for the fact that they are a part of law enforcement.

In Maryland, we have had several officers that were attacked or killed in ambush style attacks simply because they were law enforcement officers. The most recent attack coming just over a month ago in Prince George's County. Our Members have also had their personal property vandalized. We have also witnessed vandalism to Police Department property and Buildings, as well as one of our own local FOP Lodges, Baltimore City, FOP Lodge 3.

The men and women who bravely put on their uniforms and go out to protect and serve the citizens of Maryland deserve to feel safe, even though their very profession thrusts them into the perils of danger at any given moment. That is a choice and a call that each and everyone of them has answered freely and voluntarily. What these men and women have not done, is ask to be victimized based on the very profession they have chosen or the calling that chose them. The attacks on law enforcement must stop. We must make every effort to deter these attacks while supporting our law enforcement officers.

SB867 addresses this issue in a different way than other bills have in the past. SB867 creates a separate section just for first responders and lists specific illegal acts and specific penalties. This allows for the proper separation within the hate crimes statute for personal traits and professions. SB867 keeps these categories separate, as they should be, and ensures that the penalties for hate crimes against individuals based on personal traits remains at its already established level which is significantly higher than the new penalties established for the specified violations against first responders. There is a specific and easily seen difference between when a person injures or attacks a first responder due to mental illness, resistance of arrest or apprehension, or other similar reasons and solely attacking a first responder or destroying their property purely for the fact that they are a first responder. For that specific reason alone, we believe there should be a separate crime and penalty for those that would commit the outlined acts with the sole motivation being the hatred of public safety officers and women and men that work in this profession.

Please show your support for the women and men who protect us every day by voting **FAVORABLE** on Senate Bill 867 Criminal Law - Hate Crimes – First Responders.

Sincerely,

Angelo L. Consoli Jr.,

President, FOP 89, Prince George's County
2nd Vice President, FOP, Maryland State Lodge