



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger Chairman and
Members of the Judiciary 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: March 25, 2021

RE: **SB 74 – Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 – Employee Assistance Programs and Early Intervention Programs**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT SB 74** as amended by the Senate. This bill requires all law enforcement agencies to develop and implement an early intervention system and employee assistance program for all police officers that the agency employs and provide confidential mental health services.

Early intervention systems are designed to identify officer behavior and put steps in place to address it before circumstances escalate. If an officer's specific circumstances are not held in confidence, officers will refuse to take part in these programs. SB 74 provides for a confidential program and further requires a voluntary health consultation and voluntary counseling services if an officer is involved in an incident involving an accident resulting in a fatality. In addition, a mandatory mental health consultation with voluntary counseling services is required if the officer is involved in an incident involving a serious injury to the police officer, an officer-involved shooting, or any use of force resulting in a fatality or serious injury.

Most, if not all, law enforcement agencies offer employee assistance programs. SB 74 reinforces these programs to provide assistance for a broad range of work-life circumstances and requires confidential access to services. These services facilitate an officer's capacity to prepare for, recover from, and adapt to the mental, emotional, and physical effects caused by stress and adversity.

Law enforcement officers face extremely difficult circumstances daily. They put their lives on the line to protect and serve others experiencing trauma when arriving at crash scenes; addressing incidents of domestic violence; investigating shootings and murders; searching for lost children and vulnerable adults. The cumulative exposure to stress experienced over years of service, depending upon individual coping skills and resiliency, may threaten the mental and physical well-being of an officer.

SB 74 prioritizes the mental health of police officers and seeks to reduce the negative stigma of seeking mental health services commonly experienced by members of law enforcement. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT SB 74** as amended by the Senate and urge a **FAVORABLE** report.

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