



# OCEAN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Ocean City, Maryland 21842

## OCEAN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT'S SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 286

January 15, 2021

Judiciary Committee  
Attn: Chairman, Delegate Luke Clippinger  
Room 101  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Ocean City Police Department – as its Chief, I am honored and humbled to come before you in full support of House Bill 286 – Hate Crimes – Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders.

Today, the job of a Law Enforcement Officer whether in Maryland or throughout the United States is becoming increasingly difficult, challenging and dangerous. While this phenomenon continues, the current protections afforded to police officers are becoming less effective and seen by many as a non-deterrent.

Throughout my career, which is now in its 4th decade, I have never experienced a period in time when the sentiment towards our revered and noble profession was this negative. The sentiment goes beyond policing philosophies and has increasingly moved directly towards police officers in general whether they are on or off-duty. In uniform or plain clothes.

Countless, violent assaults are being committed on law enforcement officers in our great nation every day. In Ocean City, we are not immune. Despite, being a relative peaceful resort town community we have experienced first-hand a dramatic rise in assaults on police. From 2018, assaults on police in Ocean City have dramatically risen by 50%. In 2018 (74), in 2019 (113) and in 2020 (165) assaults occurred.

Recently, throughout the summer months of 2020, the Ocean City Police Department witnessed first-hand and fell victim to arguably the worst summers in the resorts history as routine and ordinary interactions with citizens became hostile and at times violent with momentum that seemed to never waiver but continued to accelerate all summer long. As we entered the Fall of 2020, the Town of Ocean City experienced the effects of an unwelcomed and unsanctioned event, known as the pop up rally bringing thousands upon thousands of visitors. Over a period of several days we experienced a prolonged and virtual on-going clash with visitors of this event. Although, we had planned ahead and had a large law enforcement presence to safeguard and protect our community we became subjects to an unwavering onslaught of non-compliance,

Judiciary Committee

January 15, 2021

Page 2

menacing and violent behavior. This event culminated in physical confrontations, as well as projectiles being propelled at and striking law enforcement officers. Although, personal injuries and property damages resulted, we continued to perform our duties and provide service necessary to protect our community.

This particular bill and its passage is extremely important and will serve as a vital safeguarding measure for first responders as they carry out their respective duties. Furthermore, it will serve with a degree of confidence that any individual(s) determined to cause harm to our first responders will face serious consequences for their actions.

We respectfully request that this Committee provide House Bill 286 with a favorable report.



Ross Buzzuro

Chief of Police

Ocean City Police Department

