



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbearly, Chair and
Members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Chief of Staff 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 4, 2022

RE: **HB 613 Public Schools – Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures - Increase**

POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT HB 613 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill increases funding for school resource officers or to provide adequate law enforcement coverage if a school is not assigned a school resource officer.

A school resource officer is a law enforcement officer who works closely with administrators in a school setting to create a safer environment for students and staff. In this role, the SRO also provides mentoring and conducts presentations on youth related issues. Because of this broader role in a school system, an SRO participates in a specialized training program designed specifically for working with students in a school setting. This training curriculum includes Maryland school law, trauma-informed counseling, restorative practices, relationship building, and peer mediation techniques. To employ the skills taught through this training an SRO must work in the school system, engage with students, build positive relationships, and direct students to resources. For many students, an SRO is a positive role model in which they can trust and confide in. These strong relationships build community trust and understanding and improve safety in the school environment.

MCPA and MSA supports an increase in funding for this purpose and requests greater flexibility in how funds may be used. Under current guidelines, if an existing law enforcement officer receives training and transfers to an SRO unit, funds cannot be used to replace the law enforcement officer who transferred. MCPA and MSA are requesting the flexibility to use funds for this purpose as long as the number of SRO positions in the unit increases. As Chiefs and Sheriffs manage their agency budgets, this flexibility would meet the specified intent of the law while ensuring other agency needs are met. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT HB 613 WITH AMENDMENTS** to provide law enforcement agencies with this flexibility.