



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 15, 2022

SPONSOR TESTIMONY
DELEGATE JOHNNY MAUTZ
DIST. 37B – CAROLINE, DORCHESTER, TALBOT & WICOMICO COUNTIES

**HB 1294—STATE EMPLOYEE AND RETIREE HEALTH AND WELFARE BENEFITS PROGRAM—BWI AIRPORT
FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT—EMPLOYEES AND DEPENDENTS**

Summary

HB1294 would allow State of Maryland Firefighters who have retired at BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport to join the state retirement system.

Background

- Before 1972 Friendship International Airport was owned and operated by Baltimore City which made all the Firefighters working there be a Baltimore City Firefighters.
- In 1972 Friendship International Airport was purchased for \$36 million by Maryland Department of Transportation under the Maryland State Aviation Administration.
- As part of this purchased the City Firefighter's where guaranteed not to lose any pay or benefits if they remained at the Airport as a State of Maryland employee's. So, the Firefighters continued to be members of the Baltimore City Police and Firefighters Pension System.
- All New State of Maryland Firefighters who were hired after 1972 were also placed in the BCPFP System, until 1993.
- **In October 1987** the MDOT/SAA hired six Contract Firefighters to fill open spots, by chance all six lived on the Eastern Shore
- **In July 1988** these six Firefighters were made Fulltime State of Maryland Employee's for DOT/SAA. *At that time in completing the paperwork to become Fulltime, they were given the forms to signed to be placed in the BCPFP System, not a Pension System controlled by the State of Maryland.*
- DOT Payroll withdraw from paychecks the contribution to the City Pension. When a Firefighter who was placed in the City Pension wanted to retire they were required to resign from State Service first, then apply for their Pension to the City of Baltimore.

Rationale

By adding these firefighters to the state pension program, they will be allowed to retire with the state pension program, instead of the BCPFP program. Since they are employees of the state, we would conclude they should have access to the state pension program.

Conclusion

We respectfully request a **favorable report of HB1303** from the Committee and thank you for considering this important legislation.