



House Bill 822

Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Membership - 9-1-1 Specialists

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: March 10, 2022

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1236 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would authorize local governments that participate in the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS) to authorize 9-1-1 specialists certified as law enforcement officers to enroll in the LEOPS program.

In 2019, the General Assembly passed Carl Henn's Law, landmark legislation to update state laws and the 9-1-1 financing system to provide the flexibility and resources needed for the deployment of a statewide Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) system that our residents expect and deserve. As Maryland accelerates its move toward NG911, counties would appreciate the option to offer 9-1-1 specialists enhanced disability and retirement benefits through the LEOPS program.

As drafted, HB 1236 would only apply to 9-1-1 specialists that are certified by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission as law enforcement officers. Because most 9-1-1 specialists are not law enforcement officers, counties are concerned that the bill would severely limit eligibility for this local option benefit enhancement.

An amendment would alleviate this concern by ensuring the bill would apply to all 9-1-1 specialists, as defined in current law. As amended, this bill would ensure that local governments have appropriate flexibility in enacting local policies designed to serve and react to community needs.

Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 1236 (proposed amendment included on the next page).

MACo proposed amendment to HB 1236:

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 3, strike in their entirety lines 18 through 21, and substitute

“ (g) 9-1-1 SPECIALIST MEANS AN EMPLOYEE OF A COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT, OR AN EMPLOYEE WORKING IN A COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT, WHOSE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

(1) RECEIVING AND PROCESSING 9-1-1 REQUESTS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES;

(2) OTHER SUPPORT FUNCTIONS DIRECTLY RELATED TO 9-1-1 REQUESTS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES; OR

(3) DISPATCHING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, FIRE RESCUE SERVICES, EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES, AND OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES TO THE SCENE OF AN EMERGENCY.”