



Maryland Transportation Authority Police Lodge #34



President
Jim Kruszynski III



Lodge Attorney
Herbert Weiner

House Appropriations Committee
Delegate Maggie McIntosh
Room 121
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 11, 2022

RE: House Bill 748 - Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Benefits (SUPPORT)

Dear Delegate McIntosh and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Fraternal Order of Police Lodge # 34 strongly supports House Bill 748. Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 34 represents the men and women of the Maryland Transportation Authority Police, which are all members the Law Enforcement Officers Pension System (LEOPS).

House Bill 748 changes the multiplier for years of credible service from 2.0% to 2.5%. Today, LEOPS members who retire at 25 years of service receive 50% of their salary while members of the State Police Retirement System receive 63.75% of their salary. The changes in this Bill will allow members of LEOPS to receive a pension benefit that is comparable to the 2.55% yearly multiplier and maximum benefit of 71.4% that our brothers and sisters in the State Police Retirement System receive.

Maryland Police Departments are experiencing record low numbers of interested applicants statewide and the applicants who do apply are carefully selecting the Police agencies that offer the best wage and benefit packages. For example, the number of police applicants who applied with the MDTA Police declined by almost 75% from 2018 (529) to 2020 (133). The MDTA Police are currently experiencing almost a 10% vacancy rate and that number is expected to potentially double in the next 12 months based the number of MDTA Police officers currently scheduled to retire in 2023 and the lack of applicants to replace those retiring.

It is imperative that LEOPS offer a competitive pension benefit comparable to other Police agencies in Maryland to attract the best qualified police candidates from an ever-diminishing pool of applicants.

Therefore, on behalf of the almost 600 members of Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 34, I thank you for your support and your FAVORABLE report on House Bill 748.

Sincerely,

Jim Kruszynski
President
FOP Lodge # 34