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Senate Bill 397 Public Safety - Local Law Enforcement Coordination Council and Coordinator and State Aid for Police Protection Fund

Position: Support

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 10, 2022

Keiffer Mitchell, Chief Legislative Officer & Senior Counselor, Office of the Governor
Erin Chase, Deputy Legislative Officer, Office of the Governor

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

Senate Bill 397 increases State Aid for Police Protection (SAPP) funding by 50%, and creates the Local Law Enforcement Coordination Council and coordinator position. This legislation fulfills Governor Hogan's promise to better support the police by increasing funding to ensure that our local law enforcement agencies have the tools and support they need to effectively keep our communities safe.

Crime, particularly violent crime, has skyrocketed across the country, and it has become apparent that we need to equip our law enforcement partners with adequate funding so that they can fulfill their duties of combating crime and protecting our neighborhoods and communities. SAPP funding was established in the 1980s to increase and supplement resources for police protection expenditures in our local communities. The legislation changes the funding formula to allow for a permanent 50% increase in funding. This increase in SAPP funding will benefit all jurisdictions in the state, including Baltimore City, who historically has not received this funding due to previous mutual agreements on state support. Eligible uses for SAPP funding include salaries and wages, capital outlay, debt service, and numerous other expenditures related to operating expenses, such as communications and contractual services. This allows the police to focus on activities directly connected with the detection and prevention of crime. Additional funding will allow our police agencies to focus on reducing crime, advancing public safety initiatives, and strengthening relationships with the communities.

Creation of the Local Law Enforcement Coordination Council, and the accompanying coordinator position, will help ensure that our local law enforcement agencies are able to work collaboratively on public safety issues and solutions, and give them the opportunity to better share data, identify best practices, and track data to ensure uniform training is occurring. This initiative will enable the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association to further expand operational training and support.

The Hogan administration takes the safety and protection of Marylanders very seriously, and this bill will help protect our communities and citizens.

For these reasons, the Administration respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 397.