

SenatorBailey_FAV_SB581.pdf

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JACK BAILEY
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Judicial Proceedings Committee



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February 23, 2022

Senate Bill 581 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Agencies – Positive Community Feedback

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 581 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Agencies – Positive Community Feedback. This bill would require law enforcement agencies to maintain a record of positive community feedback for all law enforcement officers within the agency. This directs the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a uniform process to collect this feedback from members of the public. These records would be subject to public inspection in accordance with the Maryland Public Information Act.

Last year, this Committee devoted a significant amount of time and effort on making changes to Maryland law so that the public could be more informed about the record of police officers. Senate Bill 581 is similar to an amendment I offered to one of those bills last session. This bill also contains provisions which would create a simple, accessible, and uniform process that can be implemented by all law enforcement agencies in the State that were not included in that amendment. While it is possible for law enforcement agencies to implement such a process on their own, this bill ensures that all law enforcement officers in Maryland have this information on file and ready if requested. A uniform standard would make it easier for these agencies to implement this initiative and create a fair process.

Allowing positive reports and information about an officer to be collected, released, and reviewed would provide a clearer look at an officer's whole reputation. In law enforcement, an officer's future depends on their reputation and character. This bill would help to provide a total picture of the officer's work. These are our first responders, the men and women who protect our families and our communities. Assuring our law enforcement officers that their full record would be available if their reputation is questioned or challenged will be beneficial to recruitment, retention, and the future of policing in our communities and State.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 581. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

Senator Jack Bailey