

MCPA-MSA_HB 929 LEOPS-Benefits_Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FAV



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair and
Members of the House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Natasha Mehu, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: March 9, 2023

RE: **HB 929 – Law Enforcement Officers’ Pension System – Benefits**

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs’ Association (MSA) SUPPORT HB 929. This bill increases the normal service retirement benefit multiplier for members and raises the cap on the normal service retirement benefit payments of the Law Enforcement Officers’ Pension System.

Despite recent efforts at the State and local level, law enforcement agencies across the State are having difficulty retaining and recruiting officers. Initiatives such as increasing pension benefits may assist with recruitment efforts and incentive individuals to enter the profession.

This legislation recognizes and honors the sacrifice of law enforcement officers who put their lives and safety on the line each shift they work. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA SUPPORT HB 929 and urge a FAVORABLE Committee report.

HCDS Final HB 929.pdf

Uploaded by: Barry Glassman

Position: FAV



HARFORD COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF'S UNION

PO Box 881, Bel Air, Maryland 21014

www.hcdsu.org

March 9, 2023

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: House Bill 929 – Law Enforcement Officer’s Pension System – Benefits -SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Barnes and members of the Appropriations Committee,

The Harford County Deputy Sheriff’s Union supports House Bill 929. We represent over 300 sworn deputies of the Harford County Sheriff’s Office who serve each day to keep citizens safe in Harford County and Maryland.

Recruitment and retention continue to be a challenge for law enforcement agencies across Maryland jurisdictions. Although law enforcement candidates enter the profession for many reasons, the ability to attain a reliable pension benefit is certainly a primary consideration for candidates and current members of the LEOPS plan.

House Bill 929 changes the multiplier for years of credible service from 2.0% to 2.5%. LEOPS members who currently retire with 25 years of service qualify for 50% of their salary while members of the Maryland State Police system receive 63.5% of their salary. House Bill 929 will allow LEOPS members to garner a comparable 2.55% yearly multiplier and maximum benefit of 71.4% similar to the benefit in the State Police Retirement System.

The Harford County Deputy Sheriff’s Union is grateful for your continued efforts to examine and improve pension benefits for all of Maryland’s law enforcement officers, We support House Bill 929 and request a FAVORABLE report.

Sincerely,
Gerald Eaton Jr
Gerald Eaton
Harford County Deputy Sheriff’s Union

House Bill 929 LEOPS Parity.pdf

Uploaded by: James Kruszynski

Position: FAV



Maryland Transportation Authority Police Lodge #34



President
James Kruszynski III



Lodge Attorney
Herbert Weiner

House Appropriations Committee
Delegate Ben Barnes
Room 121
House Office Building Annapolis, Maryland 21401

3-6-2023

RE: House Bill 929 -Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Benefits (SUPPORT)

Chairman Barnes and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #34 strongly **SUPPORTS** House Bill 929. Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 34 represents the men and women of the Maryland Transportation Authority Police and we are the largest agency in the Law Enforcement Officers Pension System (LEOPS).

House Bill 929 increases the multiplier for years of credible service from 2.0% to 2.5%. This adjustment will provide LEOPS members with a comparable benefit to the State Police Retirement System by allowing LEOPS Members to retire with a 70% maximum benefit at 28 years of service as opposed to the current maximum 65% at 32.5 years of service. Under the current benefit package, LEOPS members who retire at 25 years receive 50% of their salary while members of the State Police Retirement System who retire with the same 25 years receive 63.75%. By adjusting the LEOPS Multiplier to 2.5%, the LEOPS will provide a benefit that is equitable to the 2.55% that the State Police Retirement System provides its members.

Police agencies across Maryland are suffering from record high vacancy rates coupled with sky rocketing early retirements. For example, the number of police officer applicants who applied with the MDTA Police dropped by almost 75% from 2018 (529) to 2020 (133). The MDTA Police are currently experiencing almost 15% vacancy rates and based on the number of expected early and years of service retirements in 2023 we expect to see 20% vacancy rates by the end of this year. Those numbers are not sustainable in the long term.

Maryland Police agencies are desperately trying to recruit and retain qualified applicants to counter record high vacancy rates by offering more competitive wages, pension and benefit packages. Unfortunately, the current LEOPS pension benefit falls woefully short when compared to the State Police Retirement System. In comparison, the average LEOPS member will work almost 5.5 years longer and retire with approx. 31% LESS than the average State Police Retirement Benefit. In order to attract qualified candidates LEOPS must provide a comparable pension benefit to that of the other SRPS Law Enforcement members.

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 929.

Sincerely,

Jim Kruszynski
President
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 34

730 Wampler Rd. Middle River, MD 21220 / www.mdfo34.org / support@mdfo34.org

MTA Favorable HB 929 3-9-23.pdf

Uploaded by: Jenna Massoni

Position: FAV



M a r y l a n d Troopers Association



INCORPORATED 1979

March 9, 2023

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chairman and Members of the Appropriations Committee

RE: HB 929 - Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Benefits

POSITION: SUPPORT

The MTA supports HB 929 which alters the accrual rate from 2.0% to 2.5% for calculating retirement for LEOPS. We also support altering the maximum benefit for LEOPS to receive from 65% to 70% of the member's average final compensation.

Applications to the Maryland State Police are down 40% over last year. This proposed alteration to pension systems could significantly benefit the state in retaining Troopers, as well as assist in new recruiting.

Troopers devote their lives to serving the people of Maryland and this legislation has the potential to benefit the retirement savings of members of the Maryland Troopers Association. This is not only well-deserved for the protectors of our state, but it could also be an incentive for recruitment and retention within Maryland State Police.

Therefore, we support HB 929 and urge a favorable report.

Brian Blubaugh
President
Maryland Troopers Association

2023 HB 929 Written Testimony-LTRHead-Reilly.pdf

Uploaded by: Teresa Reilly

Position: FAV

TERESA E. REILLY
Legislative District 35A
Cecil and Harford Counties

DEPUTY MINORITY WHIP

Health and Government
Operations Committee

Subcommittees

Health Occupations and
Long Term Care

Public Health and
Minority Health Disparities

Rules and Executive
Nominations Committee

Chair

Harford County House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 929 – Law Enforcement Officers’ Pension System – Benefits

March 9, 2023

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

HB 929 increases the normal service retirement benefit multiplier for members of the pension plan in the Law Enforcement Officers’ Pension System (LEOPS) from 2.0% to 2.5%, for creditable service earned after June 30, 2023. The bill also raises the cap on LEOPS normal service retirement payments from 65% of average final compensation (AFC) to 70% of AFC.

This bill would also enhance the retirement benefits for covered members by allowing them to retire with the maximum 70% of AFC rate after 28 years of credible service verses the current 65% of AFC rate after 32.5 years. This has the potential of increasing retention rates for current members and new hires.

Throughout the State of Maryland—and the country—law enforcement agencies struggle to recruit new hires and retain current officers. We must ensure that our State and local Law Enforcement agencies have access to the best qualified applicants to protect and serve our communities.

It is vitally important that we add enhancements to reward the outstanding service of our current law enforcement officers and to offer competitive retirement compensation to attract the very best recruits to join the ranks. HB 929 accomplishes this mission.

HB 929 is cross-filed with SB 264.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report from the Committee.

Sincerely,

Delegate Teresa E. Reilly
District 35A
Cecil and Harford Counties

HB 929 - APR 03-09-2023 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Veronica Bruns

Position: FAV



**State Law Enforcement
Officers Labor Alliance**
542 Ritchie Highway
Severna Park, Maryland 21146



March 9, 2023

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee
121 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB 929 – Law Enforcement Officers’ Pension System – Benefits

Dear Chair Barnes:

The State Law Enforcement Labor Alliance (SLEOLA) is the exclusive representative for 1,757 active state law enforcement officers, including the following Law Enforcement Officers Pension System agencies:

- Maryland Natural Resources Police
- Field Enforcement Bureau
- Maryland State Fire Marshall
- Maryland Capitol Police
- Department of Health Police
- Maryland Vehicle Administration Police
- Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Intelligence and Investigative Division
- Warrant Apprehension Unit of the Division of Parole and Probation in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

SLEOLA is also the exclusive representative for the Maryland State Police, who are under the State Police Retirement and Pension System. We are writing in support of House Bill 929.

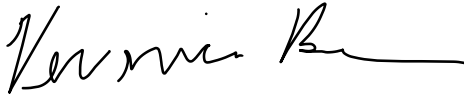
Recruiting and retention continues to be a struggle in our state for all law enforcement agencies. In the past five years, an overwhelming number of agencies have seen recruitment drop from several thousand applicants to barely several hundred. In order to recruit and retain the most qualified law enforcement candidates, agencies must be competitive with their benefit packages.

House Bill 929 will increase the multiplier for years of credible service from 2.0% to 2.5% under the Law Enforcement Officers’ Pension System (LEOPS). This will allow members of the pension system to retire with a maximum of 70% benefit at 28 years of credible service instead of the current maximum of 65% benefit at 32.5 years of credible service. Under the current benefit package of LEOPS, members who retire at 25 years only receive 50% of their salary, while members of the Maryland State Police in the State Police Retirement System receive 63.75% of their salary with the same years of service.

The adjustment proposed under House Bill 929 would allow eight of the agencies represented by SLEOLA to receive parity with the Maryland State Police who currently receive 2.55% for every year of service and achieve their maximum benefit of 71.4% at 28 years of service.

For these reasons, the State Law Enforcement Labor Alliance would like to thank the sponsor of this bill and ask the Committee for a favorable report for this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Veronica Bruns", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Veronica Bruns
Treasurer

cc: Members, House Appropriations Committee

HB0929-APP_MACo_SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin Kinnally

Position: FWA



House Bill 929

Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Benefits

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: March 9, 2023

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 929 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would increase the normal service retirement benefit multiplier for members of the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System from 2.0% to 2.5%. The bill would also raise the cap on normal service retirement benefit payments from 65% to 70% of the member's average final compensation.

HB 929 is a significant unfunded mandate on county governments. A "local option amendment" would relieve that mandate and allow each jurisdiction to weigh these costs appropriately.

For county governments that participate in the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS), this legislation effects an automatic increase in county law enforcement pension benefits, and a new variable in county government pension contributions. Without a true local option, this bill is simply not affordable as a statewide county mandate and could present substantial budget difficulties.

Several Maryland county governments participate in the State's Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System. Chapter 784 of 2018 increased the cap on LEOPS normal service retirement from 60% to 65% of the member's average final compensation. The changes in this legislation could further widen the gap between retirement options for one portion of the county workforce—law enforcement—and all other county employees.

According to the bill's fiscal note, local pension liabilities would increase by a combined total of approximately \$29.7 million, and employer normal costs would increase by \$2.5 million. Amortizing the increased liabilities and adding the full normal cost increase would result in pension contributions growing significantly in fiscal 2025 and annually thereafter, according to actuarial assumptions.

An amendment could resolve this county mandate. There is precedent for providing county members of the state system with an option to join the benefit enhancement, too. Such an option would provide a discrete amount of time for a county government to determine whether they would join the enhancement.

Counties stand ready to work with state policymakers to develop flexible and optional tools to create broad or targeted personnel incentives, but resist state-mandated changes that preclude local input.

Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 929, with a "local option" amendment to avoid a substantial unfunded mandate on local governments.