

2023 HB 1126 - Local Law Enforcement - Recruitment

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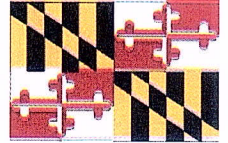
Position: FAV



CLYDE BOATWRIGHT
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FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

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KENNY SCHUBERT
SECRETARY

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TREASURER

February 27, 2023

HB 1126 - Local Law Enforcement – Recruitment and Hiring – Bonus Grants

Dear Chairman Barnes and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

The Maryland State Fraternal Order of Police **SUPPORTS House Bill 1126 - Local Law Enforcement – Recruitment and Hiring – Bonus Grants**. This bill will require the Governor to include in the annual Budget Bill an appropriation of \$3,500,000 for local law enforcement agencies to be used as grants to improve police officer recruitment and hiring for fiscal years 2025 through 2027. The grants can be used to offer hiring bonuses to new hires of up to \$15,000. It also limits which agencies would qualify for these grants.

The past few years have shown a drastic decrease in the applications and hiring of new police officers and the exit of many experienced police officers. This has left many agencies with huge vacancy rates. Municipal agencies face the double negative of having smaller budgets and smaller sized agencies. For them only 1 or 2 vacancies can lead to a serious shortage as many of these agencies represent smaller jurisdictions and have a size of 2 to 50 officers and budgets that cannot compete with the larger agencies that are able to grab applicants with hiring bonuses the municipalities cannot afford. This bill will allow them to be competitive with those agencies and fill the voids that they so desperately need to fill.

On behalf of the more than 20,000 Courageous Men and Women of the Maryland Fraternal Order of Police we thank you for your support, thank Delegate Ivey for sponsoring this legislation, and ask for your **FAVORABLE** vote on **House Bill 1126 - Local Law Enforcement – Recruitment and Hiring – Bonus Grants**

Angelo L. Consoli Jr,
2nd Vice President, FOP, Maryland State Lodge
President, FOP Lodge 89, Prince George's County

HB 1126 - FWA-MML.pdf

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Position: FWA



Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

March 9, 2023

Committee: House Appropriations

Bill: HB 1126 - Local Law Enforcement - Recruitment and Hiring - Bonus Grants

Position: Support with Amendment

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League supports House Bill 1126 with amendment, to remove the five municipalities specifically identified as excluded from the benefits of the bill. We expect the grant funding provided in the bill to benefit recruitment practices of municipal police departments and believe all municipal departments should be eligible.

The proposed amendment below would leave the crux of the bill intact but would eliminate the reference to specific municipal police agencies that are ineligible to receive grant funding from this program. Importantly, the restriction on municipal departments that offered a signing bonus within the past fiscal years would remain in the bill. This may capture the municipalities listed in the bill, but it will not identify them directly:

On page 2, line 1:

(B) THE FOLLOWING LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR A GRANT UNDER THIS SECTION:

(1) A POLICE DEPARTMENT OF A MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OR A SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT THAT, IN THE PREVIOUS 5 FISCAL YEARS, HAS PROVIDED A SIGN-ON BONUS OF MORE THAN \$20,000 PER NEW POLICE OFFICER HIRE; AND

~~(2) THE POLICE DEPARTMENTS OF:~~

~~(I) BALTIMORE CITY;~~

~~(II) BOWIE;~~

~~(III) COLLEGE PARK;~~

~~(IV) GREENBELT; AND~~

~~(V) LAUREL.~~

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There are 88 municipal police departments in Maryland and at some point there have been challenges with police officer recruitment and retention in every part of the State; this problem seems to be particularly pervasive at the moment. Some police departments use signing bonuses as a tool to improve officer recruitment, but of course it must be part of the department's budget. This bill provides grant funding for local police departments that can be used only for officer signing bonuses to help defray the cost of this recruitment tool.

The grant funding established in HB 1126 is a proactive method for the State to assist local police departments recruit top talent. For this reason, the League respectfully requests that this committee provide a favorable report on House Bill 1126 with the above amendment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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HB1126_PGCMA_FAVWA.pdf

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Position: FWA



Prince George's County Municipal Association
An Association of 27 Municipalities



HOUSE BILL 1126 – SUPPORT W/ AMENDMENTS
Appropriations Committee
March 9, 2023

The Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA) writes to **SUPPORT w/ AMENDS House Bill 1126 - Local Law Enforcement – Recruitment and Hiring – Bonus Grants** which requires the Governor to appropriate \$3,500,000 for certain fiscal years for grant funding for certain local law enforcement agencies to improve police officer recruitment and hiring. It also requires the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services to administer certain funds and requires certain local law enforcement agencies to use grant funding for certain purposes, ensuring certain local law enforcement agencies will submit certain information to the Office as well.

Nationally, local law enforcement is experiencing a crisis in officer recruitment and retention. In 2019 a survey of law enforcement executives was conducted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), this report found that 78% of responding agencies had difficulty recruiting qualified candidates, and 75% felt that recruiting challenges were worse than they had been five years earlier (IACP, 2019). Further data obtained by the Police Executive Research Foundation (PERF) found that 63% of agencies reported a decrease in the number of applicants for open police-officer positions relative to five years earlier (PERF, 2019).

Our municipalities are not immune to this shortage and the development of grant funding for local law enforcement agencies to improve police officer recruitment and hiring is a critical step for the State to take. Unfortunately, challenges affecting the recruiting and retention of qualified police officers can contribute to higher rates of crime and social dysfunction in communities. Therefore, we believe it is necessary that this bill be amended to include all municipalities.

By amending HB1126, the legislature would be prioritizing best outcomes for the 27 municipalities in Prince George's County and across the State and supporting legislation that is inclusive of all municipalities' need for greater support for local law enforcement. Therefore, PGCMA respectfully requests a **favorable** report for **House Bill 1126**. Thank you.

Melinda Mendoza, President
The Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA)

For more information call or email:

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