



State of Maryland Department of State Police
Government Affairs Section
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POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: March 30, 2023

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 707 **POSITION:** Support

BILL TITLE: Public Safety - Deputy State Fire Marshal –
Probationary Status and Promotion

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:

This legislation seeks to amend the current law to specifically include police employees appointed as Deputy State Fire Marshals relating to probationary periods and how the promotion of these employees is handled.

Deputy State Fire Marshals, who are police employees, are required to complete an average of six months of basic police training to meet the minimum requirements of the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission. Upon successful completion of this basic training, the police employee is then required to complete a field training program to meet the minimum requirements of the Training Commission. This field training program is approximately 600 hours over the course of 15 weeks. After completion of this basic and field training, Deputy State Fire Marshals are then assigned to mandatory core technical training programs to be able to function as fire investigators or bomb technicians. The minimum training course for fire investigation is two weeks, and if applicable bomb technician training is six weeks. Both programs can take 12 to 18 months to be placed in the training class. The time to complete this training far exceeds the 6-month provision for civilian employees.

Due to the extensive time required for training a police employee appointed as a Deputy State Fire Marshal a six-month probationary period is not practical. It allows no time for thoughtful evaluation of a new employee or to provide a period for remedial training if required. This two-year probationary period would ensure adequate time for evaluation and determination of the completion of basic, field, and technical core training to perform the job functions of a police employee appointed to the Office of the State Fire Marshal. This two-year probationary

period is consistent for police employees within the Department and existing agency policy and practices.

After completion of this training and a probationary period, police employees advance in rank. This promotion provides additional responsibilities to the employee and grants increased independent decision-making. Police employees appointed as Deputy State Fire Marshals make a sharp increase in responsibilities upon promotion to supervisory and management ranks. Currently, these police employees are subject to civilian increase restrictions which result in the employee losing steps at a reduced salary increase. This restriction creates a disparity between the new promotion and the increase in responsibility and decision-making. The promotional increase is not commensurate with the expected duties of the employee. At times employees decline promotional opportunities due to the predicated gap between responsibilities and wage increases. Currently, within the Department of State Police, police employees who are promoted to a higher rank are entitled to the pay specified for the new rank at the same step they currently occupy. This legislation seeks to codify the existing practice of how promotions are handled for police employees to include Deputy State Fire Marshals.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal urges the Committee to give Senate Bill 707 a favorable report.