



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](http://www.mdfo34.org) / [support@mdfo34.org](mailto:support@mdfo34.org)