

MCPA-MSA_SB 264 LEOPS-Benefits_Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FAV



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair and
Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation 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: February 16, 2023

RE: **SB 264 – Law Enforcement Officers’ Pension System – Benefits**

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs’ Association (MSA) SUPPORT SB 264. 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 SB 264 and urge a FAVORABLE Committee report.

SB264 HCDSU.pdf

Uploaded by: Barry Glassman

Position: FAV



HARFORD COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF'S UNION

PO Box 881, Bel Air, Maryland 21014

www.hcdsu.org

February 15, 2023

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Tax Committee
Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Senate Bill 264 Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System – Benefits

Dear Senator Guzzone and members of the Budget and Tax Committee,

The Harford County Deputy Sheriff's Union supports Senate Bill 264. 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.

Senate Bill 264 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. Senate Bill 264 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 Senate Bill 264 and request a FAVORABLE report.

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

Senate Bill 264 Testimony .pdf

Uploaded by: James Kruszynski

Position: FAV



Maryland Transportation Authority Police Lodge #34



President
James Kruszynski III



Lodge Attorney
Herbert Weiner

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Senator Guy Guzzone Chair
3 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 13, 2023

RE: Senate Bill 264 -Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Benefits(SUPPORT)

Dear Senator Guzzone and Distinguished Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

Maryland Transportation Authority Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #34 strongly **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 264. 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).

Senate Bill 264 increases the multiplier for years of credible service from 2.0% to 2.5%. This will allow members of the LEOPS system 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 only receive 50% of their salary while members of the State Police Retirement System receive 63.75%. This crucial adjustment to 2.5% per year will provide LEOPS members a fair and comparable benefit to the 2.55% per year that the State Police Retirement System currently offers its members

Police agencies across Maryland are seeing record high vacancy rates coupled with sky rocketing early retirement numbers. For example, the number of police 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.

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, LEOPS does not currently offer a very competitive pension benefit when compared to the State Police Retirement System. SB 264 would allow LEOPS Police Agencies to ability to offer a competitive pension and benefits packages which will enhance our ability to recruit and retain the very best law enforcement officers.

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 Senate Bill 264.

Sincerely,

Jim Kruszynski
President
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 34

MTA Favorable SB264 2-16-23.pdf

Uploaded by: Jenna Massoni

Position: FAV



M a r y l a n d Troopers Association



INCORPORATED 1979

February 16, 2023

The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chairman and Members of the Budget & Taxation Committee

RE: **SB264 - Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Benefits**

POSITION: SUPPORT

The MTA supports SB 264 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 SB 264 and urge a favorable report.

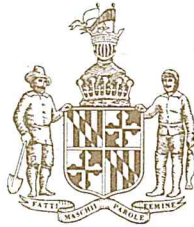
Brian Blubaugh
President
Maryland Troopers Association

SB264JacksonTestimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Jackson

Position: FAV

MICHAEL A. JACKSON
Legislative District 27
Calvert, Charles and
Prince George's Counties



Annapolis Office
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Suite 3 West
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3700 · 301-858-3700
800-492-7122 Ext. 3700
Michael.Jackson@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee
Subcommittees
Chair, Pensions
Public Safety, Transportation, and
Environment

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

District Office
250 Merrimac Court
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678

TESTIMONY - SENATE BILL 264
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS' PENSION SYSTEM -
BENEFITS
BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 16, 2023

Fellow Committee Members:

Senate Bill 264 is a piece of legislation that makes a couple of changes to the current formulas in the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System. The bill raises the cap on retirement benefit payments from 65% to 70%, and it increases the retirement benefit multiplier from 2% to 2.5%.

As someone who spent the majority of his professional career in the public safety arena, this issue is very important to me. The changes proposed in this legislation would be a solid step to improve both recruitment and retention efforts for Maryland law enforcement agencies who are facing drastic shortages in applicants to fill positions.

This bill is a straightforward and modest effort to help level the benefit playing field for agencies that take part in the Law Enforcement Officers Pension System with both competing agencies and the private sector.

For the reasons listed above, I ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 264.

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Uploaded by: Veronica Bruns

Position: FAV



State Law Enforcement Officers Labor Alliance

February 15, 2023

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Street
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: SB 264 – Law Enforcement Officers’ Pension System – Benefits
SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Guzzone and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am Veronica Bruns, a Corporal with the Maryland Natural Resources Police, and the Treasurer of the State Law Enforcement Officers Labor Alliance (SLEOLA) which is the exclusive representative for approximately 1,800 active state law enforcement officers, including eight agencies who are affected by SB 264: 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, and the Warrant Apprehension Unit of the Division of Parole and Probation in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

I am here to testify in support of SB 264. 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.

Senate Bill 264 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 Senate Bill 264 would allow eight 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.

Therefore, on behalf of the State Law Enforcement Labor Alliance, I would like to thank the sponsor of this bill and would ask the Committee for a favorable report of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Veronica Bruns
Treasurer

cc: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

SB0264-BT_MACo_SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin Kinnally

Position: FWA



Senate Bill 264

Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Benefits

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: February 16, 2023

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 264 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.

SB 264 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 SB 264, with a "local option" amendment to avoid a substantial unfunded mandate on local governments.