



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