



Maryland Transportation Authority Police Lodge #34



President
James Kruszynski III



Lodge Attorney
Herbert Weiner

House Judiciary Committee
Chairman Luke Clippinger
Room 101
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 21, 2023

RE: House Bill 731 -Pensions and Retirement – Forfeiture of Benefits – Law Enforcement Officers (OPPOSE)

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Lodge 34 opposes House Bill 731. FOP Lodge 34 represents the brave men and women of the Maryland Transportation Authority Police which is the largest agency in the Law Enforcement Officers Pension System (LEOPS).

House Bill 731 provides the means to forfeit the pension benefits of Law Enforcement Officers and ONLY Law Enforcement Officers who are members of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension system and who meet certain criteria of “qualifying crimes” as defined in the Bill. While FOP Lodge 34 absolutely supports accountability for ANY Law Enforcement Officer who commits a crime, this Bill unfairly targets ONLY Law Enforcement Officers and ONLY those in the SRPS. Law Enforcement Officers comprise only a small fraction of the 194,000 Active Members of the SRPS. FOP 34 feels that if the need exists for an avenue to target pension benefits of State Employees shouldn’t that ability apply to all members of the State Retirement and Pension System? To solely target Law Enforcement Officers invokes a sense of “rules for thee but not for me” attitude which I am certain was not the intent of this legislation. The very same rules should be applied to ALL of the over to 400,000 State Employees who are convicted of certain “Qualifying Crimes”. Too often in the past few years, new legislation has been implemented which solely applies to Law Enforcement and does not apply to any other occupation in Maryland.

In addition to the above concerns, we feel this Bill unfairly places a burden on dependents who will be forced into a prolonged battle to fight for benefits that have been forfeited through no fault of their own. Spouses and dependents plan their futures on pension and benefits promised from the SRPS and should not have their lives upended based on a crime that may or may not have been committed by someone else.

Therefore, on behalf of the almost 600 members of Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 34, I thank you for your UNFAVORABLE report on House Bill 731.

Sincerely,

Jim Kruszynski
President
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 34