



## **Senate Bill 368**

### *Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Membership - Emergency Medical Technicians*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: March 23, 2023

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 368. This bill would authorize local governments that participate in the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS) to permit paid emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to enroll in the LEOPS program.

Emergency medical services in Maryland are rooted in the skills and commitment of county first responders, including EMTs. Counties would appreciate the option to offer EMTs enhanced disability and retirement benefits through the LEOPS program. MACo prefers the approach offered by SB 368, as it provides local autonomy to determine the best way to provide these incentives, rather than those that mandate reductions in local revenue sources.

Counties and municipalities in Maryland are eligible to participate in LEOPS. If 60% of the law enforcement officers or paid firefighters (including paid paramedics) in an eligible governmental unit petition to become members of LEOPS, the legislative body of the eligible local government may approve their participation.

This bill would ensure that local governments have appropriate flexibility in enacting local policies designed to serve and react to community needs.

Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 368.