ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY
MARYLAND
County Executive Steuart Pittman

March 26, 2024

Senate Bill 380

Police Recruitment and Retention Workgroup

House Appropriations Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 380 Police Recruitment and Retention Workgroup. This Bill will establish a workgroup to review issues and factors potentially contributing to the decline in police officer retention statewide, examine successful recruitment and retention strategies, and design a new statewide joint apprenticeship training program.

Our police force is a foundational pillar of public safety. I believe our police department is among the best in the country, and I am proud of the quality of our officers and their service. However, despite having an exceptional benefit package and one of the highest starting salaries in the state, we are still incredibly lean. Our county has 808 positions authorized, but our number stands at 766 today, a significant drop from the 806 high in 2020.

Due to the minimum staffing level requirement for patrol, a shortage of officers means mandatory overtime for those we employ. Overtime is not only expensive for our taxpayers, but also exhausting for our officers and disruptive for their families. Many specialty officers also have to be reassigned to patrol. This means they are moved from crisis intervention, criminal investigations, special operations, property management, etc., which increases the difficulty for us in maintaining our public safety commitment to serve in those areas. We already have the best academy, technology, and compensation in the area, but it's not enough to recruit more officers and stop them from looking for work elsewhere.

Given that this problem is not unique to just Anne Arundel County, we should work together as a state to investigate this issue and seek to create long-term sustainable strategies that are fiscally responsible. Establishing a special workgroup is the first step. For these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 380.

Steuart Pittman
County Executive