



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

House Bill 618

Police Recruitment and Retention Workgroup

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: February 20, 2024

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 618. This bill would establish a workgroup to study the issues and factors contributing to police officer recruitment as well as the decline in police officer retention statewide.

Staffing shortages have created complications across many sectors, but few pose a dire and immediate threat to public safety in the same way as shortages in law enforcement personnel. Vacancies, in conjunction with the percentage of employees eligible for retirement, paint an even more disturbing picture of the breadth of this crisis.

County law enforcement officers are on the ground every day facing these challenges head-on – they are actively experiencing the results of a declining workforce juxtaposed with the evolving needs and challenges of their communities. These day-to-day, lived experiences of local law enforcement are invaluable in solving this crisis, as theirs is the clearest lens through which to bring these issues into focus for a capable, diverse, and well-meaning workgroup of stakeholders.

Counties applaud the willingness to focus attention on recommendations to help solve this growing problem and the inclusion of county representatives in that process. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 618.