

Cpl. Jason Dykes  
Maryland State Police  
Senate Bill 1114 - Support

For the record, my name is Jason Dykes. I currently serve as a corporal in the Maryland State Police and have served in law enforcement in Maryland for 30 years.

I respectfully am requesting a transfer of my prior service with the Salisbury Police Department to the State Retirement and Pension System through Senate Bill 1114.

As way of background, I have been working in good faith to resolve this matter for the past several years when I began the process of attempting to purchase my nearly 10 years of service with the Salisbury Police Department more than a decade ago. My time with SPD was credited under a state combined pension system (MACLEO) that no longer exists. Eventually I received a phone call stating that I was not able to purchase my SPD time due to a break in service as my time with the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office, which is not under a state retirement system. At that time, I was not given information regarding appeal options before the SRPS.

In 2015, I contacted local Senators and Delegates for guidance and assistance in this matter and was advised to work directly with the staff from the State Retirement and Pension System. After considerable communications, I was told that my time with the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office was a break in service greater than 30 days and that I was ineligible to buy my nearly decade of service back.

Also in 2015, I contacted then President of the Maryland Troopers Association, Kirk Daugherty, for assistance in possibly pursuing the buy back/roll over option. President Daugherty put me in touch with Richard Norman, SRPS Board of Trustees Member. He informed me that SRPS has considered breaks in service over 30 days for approval of transfer of service.

Given the lack of awareness and transparency on this point, and inconsistent application of COMAR, President Daugherty put me in touch with the MTA attorney, Rebecca Smith. Through Rebecca Smith's representation, eventually, I was denied by SRPS again. SRPS referenced COMAR as the reason for my ineligibility.

I discovered, not via SRPS, that I could request a hearing and if that failed, I could appeal. Both of which I did. Although I was represented at this hearing by my attorney, I was unable to personally present my appeal due to the fact I was attending the funeral of WCSO Cpl. Hilliard who was killed in the line of duty. Ms. Smith advised me that my request was denied; however, she further indicated that Comptroller Franchot (a member of SRPS at the time) shared with my attorney that he was sympathetic of the situation and advised pursuing a legislative bill as my State Senator has offered to do given that I have exhausted non-legislative actions to resolve this matter.

In 2022, I began working with Senator Carozza on this matter. After consulting and working with senior SRPS personnel for the past couple of years, Senator Carozza and Delegate Carl Anderton agreed to sponsor a transfer of service bill this session.

I've been a lifelong resident of Maryland. I have been a LEO in this state since 1996 (I started in 1994 as a Cadet with SPD). My SPD time is vested and is in a state system. I receive my MSP retirement information from SRPS, as well as my SPD retirement information.

I am unable to understand how a law enforcement officer serving out of state with a break in service is eligible and I am not. I cannot fathom why I'm being penalized for dedicating a 30-year career in Maryland as LEO by not being able to purchase my time of service.

I am not asking for something that's not mine, nor something that's not there nor something that I have not earned. I understand that I will pay out of pocket or take a deficit in retirement percentage to rollover my time.

Page 2

During my career, I have served in numerous roles from a road patrol officer, to an officer on the fugitive warrant unit, a mounted patrol officer, a detective, an undercover narcotics investigator and a current member of the MSP Digital Forensic Lab. I have had two incidents in my career where I've been shot at by a suspect, both of whom ultimately shot themselves, including one of whom I exchanged gunfire with. I attended two funerals for two LEO's, WCSO Cpl. Glenn Hilliard and Delmar Police Cpl. Keith Heacock, both whom I have known for many years and both losing their lives in the line of duty.

During a time when this Maryland General Assembly has focused on the recruitment and retention of dedicated law enforcement, I am only asking to be treated fairly, and in a way that is transparent and consistent with other approvals that have been made in the past.

Thank you for your time, and I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 1114.