

JACK BAILEY
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Budget & Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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Senate Bill 7 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Agencies – Positive Community Feedback

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 7 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Agencies – Positive Community Feedback. Senate Bill 7 would require law enforcement agencies to maintain a record of positive community feedback for all law enforcement officers within the agency. This directs the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a uniform process to collect this feedback from members of the public. These records would be subject to public inspection in accordance with the Maryland Public Information Act.

Over the past several years, this Committee has devoted a significant amount of time and effort on making changes to Maryland law so that the public could be more informed about the record of police officers. I believe that this bill is consistent with those efforts. This bill contains provisions which would create a simple, accessible, and uniform process that can be implemented by all law enforcement agencies in the State. While it is possible for law enforcement agencies to implement such a process on their own, this bill ensures that all law enforcement agencies in Maryland have this information on file and ready if requested. A uniform standard would make it easier for these agencies to implement this initiative and create a fair process. This bill also creates the exemption to the Maryland Public Information Act necessary to make the release of this part of the officer's personnel file permissible under State law.

Allowing positive reports and information about an officer to be collected, released, and reviewed would provide a clearer look at an officer's whole reputation. In law enforcement, an officer's future depends on their reputation and character. This bill would help to provide a total picture of the officer's work by allowing easy access to all records, positive and negative. These are our first responders, the men and women who protect our families and our communities. Assuring our law enforcement officers that their full record would be available if their reputation is questioned or challenged will be beneficial to recruitment, retention, and the future of policing in our communities and State.

This bill is identical to Senate Bill 69 from last year as it passed this Committee and the full Senate. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 7. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

Senator Jack Bailey