

February 9, 2024

The Honorable Chairman Smith  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

RE: **SB 470 – Growing Apprenticeships and the Public Safety Workforce (GAPS) Act**  
**Position: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

Dear Mr. Chairman Smith and esteemed Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland State Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), we support the Governor's bill, HB 597 – Growing Apprenticeships and the Public Safety Workforce (GAPS) Act. We request an amendment to this bill that would clarify that the peer support programs established by the bill would be "confidential." Our language below is the suggested amendment:

*(M) (1) (III) ESTABLISHING CONFIDENTIAL PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS.*

We believe the amendment would clarify the policy to be developed by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC). It is important for our members to ensure that mental wellness policies remain confidential. In fact, the Legislature passed a similar bill in 2022 (SB 446) that created confidential peer support programs for fire, rescue, and emergency medical service entities. Our amendment is essentially mirroring the concept from that legislation.

Thank you again for your support and please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Ari Plaut, Esq.

On Behalf of the FOP