

February 2, 2024

The Honorable Chairman Clippinger
House Judiciary Committee

RE: **HB 597 – Growing Apprenticeships and the Public Safety Workforce (GAPS)
Act**
Position: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Dear Mr. Chairman Clippinger and esteemed Members of the House Judiciary
Committee,

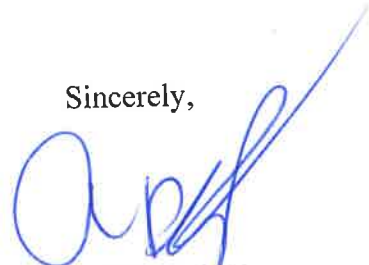
On behalf of the Maryland State Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), we support the
Governor's bill, HB 597 – Growing Apprenticeships and the Public Safety Workforce (GAPS)
Act. We request an amendment to this bill that would clarify that the peer support programs
established by the bill would be "confidential."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