



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone., Chair and
Members of the Budget & Taxation Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Samira Jackson, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 5, 2025

RE: **SB 396 Public Safety Officer – Performance of Duties – Death and Disability Benefits**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT SB 396**. As introduced, this bill changes the eligibility requirements for a public safety death benefit award for an individual who commits suicide. As written, this bill will expand benefits for families of fallen public safety officers and public safety officers who suffer from a disability or from post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD). Additionally, this bill authorizes certain 9-1-1 specialists to qualify as members of the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System as employees of a participating governmental unit.

The intent of SB 396 is to align with recent changes to the federal Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program. In 2022, federal legislation passed to expand coverage to include mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), disabilities caused by attempted suicides, and deaths caused by officer suicides.

Regardless of the agency or uniform worn, the men and women of law enforcement and other public safety occupations have stepped forward on behalf of the citizens of their communities and of our State. Each one has taken an oath, a promise, to put the well-being of others first. As we have seen all too often, these professionals put their lives and safety on the line each shift they work. The situations they encounter are traumatic, take an emotional toll, and unfortunately, in some cases, may result in an officer taking his or her own life. When these situations occur, families struggle as well.

SB 396 recognizes and honors the sacrifice of public safety officers and their families. MCPA and MSA believe this is warranted and appropriate considering the dangerous work these individuals perform throughout their careers and their dedication to service and protection of the public.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT SB 396** and urge a **FAVORABLE** report.

532 Baltimore Boulevard, Suite 308
Westminster, Maryland 21157
667-314-3216 / 667-314-3236