



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair and
Members of the Health and Government Operations 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: March 13, 2025

RE: **HB 1544 - Public Safety - Maryland Law Enforcement Public Service Medal and
Key Bridge Collapse Victims Memorial Tribute**

POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (“MCPA”) and the Maryland Sheriffs’ Association (“MSA”) **SUPPORT HB 1544 with amendments.** This bill establishes a Law Enforcement Public Service Medal, which is to be considered the highest state honor awarded to law enforcement officers.

The MCPA-MSA expresses their sincere appreciation for the introduction of HB 1544, the Maryland Law Enforcement Public Service Medal Bill. This bill rightfully recognizes the extraordinary bravery and sacrifices of law enforcement officers who have displayed exceptional public service, valor, and heroism. The intent of this legislation aligns with our shared commitment to honoring those who go above and beyond in serving and protecting our communities.

However, while we fully support the establishment of the medal, we believe that the mandatory promotion provision outlined on page 4, lines 4-5, should be reconsidered. Granting a one-grade promotion upon receiving the medal allows an external entity to enact personnel decisions that traditionally fall within the purview of an officer’s respective agency. Furthermore, this bill is not aligned with the process for promotions across law enforcement agencies, thus creating potential conflicts with existing policies and merit-based advancement criteria. The decision to promote should remain within the authority of the officer’s department to maintain consistency with previously established promotional procedures.

We strongly support the intent of this bill and the recognition it provides to Maryland’s dedicated law enforcement officers. However, we respectfully recommend that the mandatory promotion provision be stricken to ensure that promotional decisions remain within the appropriate chain of command, while still allowing agencies to honor their officers accordingly. We welcome an opportunity to work collaboratively to refine the bill in a manner that best serves the interests of law enforcement officers and

their departments while preserving the integrity of the promotion process. For these reasons, MCPA-MSA **SUPPORT HB 1544 with amendments** and urge a **FAVORABLE** committee report.

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