



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair and
Members of the Judiciary 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 11, 2025

RE: **HB 675 – Public Safety – Rape Kit Testing Grant Fund - Alterations**

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT HB 675 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill expands the uses of the Sexual Assault Kit Testing Grant Program

The Sexual Assault Kit Testing Grant Program was established through HB 1268, CH. 508, Acts of 2019. The purpose is to provide grant funding to the Maryland State Police (MSP) and local law enforcement to pay for the testing of sexual assault evidence collection kits by forensic laboratories.

MCPA and MSA understand the importance of testing rape kits and appreciates the grant program to ensure resources are available to do so. This is a very important function of our forensic laboratories, and it should be carried out with a sense of urgency.

HB 675 incorporates additional purposes for the use of the fund. It would provide funding to the Office of the Attorney General to assist law enforcement agency investigations of crimes involving sexual assault evidence collection kits that were collected before October 1, 2020; and provide funding for a statewide sexual assault victim notification hotline and related personnel.

MCPA and MSA does not dispute the addition of these purposes, but is concerned these purposes could divert funding from the original intent of the fund - to provide grant funding to the Maryland State Police and local law enforcement to pay for the testing of sexual assault evidence collection kits by forensic laboratories.

Further, HB 675, as introduced, removed language that authorized the fund to be used for equipment, supplies, personnel, and outsourcing necessary for the testing of the kits. MCPA and MSA appreciates the sponsor amendments to allow funds to still be used for this purpose and to extend the timeframe for the grants to address operational issues.

MCPA and MSA still have concerns with the possibility of funds being diverted from the original purpose of the fund. To address this, MCPA and MSA proposes two options. One, amend HB 675 to place funding priority on the original purposes and uses of the fund. Or, amend to ensure funds distributed

to the purposes of the fund outlined in subsection (C) are not less than what was received in the prior fiscal year.

MCPA and MSA have been having conversations with the sponsor and interested stakeholders and looks forward to continuing these conversations on amendments.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT HB 675 WITH AMENDMENTS** and urge a **FAVORABLE** Committee report as amended.

Option 1

On page 3, following (5) in line 3 insert “AFTER DISTRIBUTING FUNDING TO PAY FOR TESTING AS SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION (C) (1) OF THE SECTION, THE GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF CRIME PREVENTION AND POLICY MAY PROVIDE GRANTS TO:”

Option 2

On page 3, following line 2, insert

“(5) FUNDS PROVIDED FOR THE PURPOSE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (C)(1) SHALL NOT BE LESS THAN WHAT WAS RECEIVED IN THE PRIOR FISCAL YEAR.”