

SB 766 - Department of General Services - Maryland Capitol Police - Jurisdiction

Position: Support

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Date: March 4, 2025

From: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Department of General Services (DGS) requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 766. This departmental bill will significantly improve the law enforcement capabilities of the Maryland Capital Police by repealing and updating outdated provisions of state law, providing for statewide jurisdiction for law enforcement activities, and enhancing the scope of primary responsibility for the security of state-owned and leased properties.

This legislation will ensure that all Maryland Capital Police Officers are fully authorized to enforce Maryland's criminal laws on a statewide basis. This scope of authority is consistent with that of the Maryland State Police and essential to allowing the Maryland Capital Police to fully engage in all aspects of law enforcement related to their roles as State police officers. Routine police functions, such as investigations, arrests, serving warrants and summonses, and wellness checks, are unduly impeded under current law.

At the same time, SB 766 recognizes the need for communication and collaboration with other State and local law enforcement agencies. The bill clarifies that the statewide law enforcement activities of Maryland Capital Police officers will be conducted in a manner that requires notice to other State and local law enforcement agencies. Again, this bill appropriately updates the law governing the Maryland Capital Police to provide for the similar type of notice to other law enforcement agencies that is reflected in other provisions of state law.

This legislation repeals outdated provisions of statute governing the roles and responsibilities of the Maryland Capital Police at specific locations, including the State Center in Baltimore City, and the Annapolis State House and Legislative and Executive complex, and District Court Houses. Today, the footprint of state facilities and personnel for which the Maryland Capital Police are primarily responsible includes an array of widely dispersed state-owned and leased properties. This bill appropriately reflects this current landscape.

SB 766 also updates the law by expanding the scope of the perimeter of safety and security surrounding these properties. Specifically, the bill allows the Maryland Capital Police to secure and enforce State laws in and surrounding state facilities within a perimeter of 2,000 feet, a much needed update from the historic 1,000 feet. Safety and security surrounding locations of state operations and services is critical for our dedicated state personnel and the communities in which state facilities are located.

For these reasons, DGS requests a favorable report on SB 766. In addition, DGS requests a technical amendment to ensure that statewide jurisdiction also includes vehicle law enforcement.