

# **Senate Testimony 1544.pdf**

Uploaded by: Harry Bhandari

Position: FAV

**Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 1544, Public Safety - Maryland Law Enforcement Public Service Medal and Key Bridge Collapse Victims Memorial Tribute. The tragic collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge on March 26, 2024, was a devastating event that took the lives of six hardworking individuals and tested the strength of our emergency response teams. In the face of this disaster, our law enforcement officers demonstrated exceptional courage, risking their lives to save others. Their bravery deserves to be recognized in a meaningful and lasting way.

HB 1544 seeks to establish the Maryland Law Enforcement Public Service Medal as the highest state honor awarded to law enforcement officers who demonstrate extraordinary valor and selflessness. This medal will be awarded to those who have gone above and beyond the call of duty—officers who have sacrificed their lives to save others, prevent significant crimes, or respond to critical emergencies. By establishing a formal nomination, selection, and awarding process, we ensure that those who embody the highest ideals of public service receive the recognition they deserve.

In response to the will of the HGO Committee, I introduced an amendment to broaden the bill's scope beyond law enforcement. This amendment proposes the creation of two additional honors: the Maryland Highway Worker Public Service Medal and the Maryland Pilot Public Service Medal. These additions aim to recognize the extraordinary service of the vital contributions of highway workers and maritime pilots during the Key Bridge collapse. Due to time constraints, we were unable to introduce the amendment in the House.

This legislation, including these amendments, will ensure that the extraordinary contributions of all public servants who risk their lives during times of crisis are appropriately honored. Additionally, it mandates an annual ceremony to remember both the victims of the Key Bridge collapse and the heroic efforts of those who responded, keeping their memory alive for future generations.

By passing HB 1544, we send a clear message of gratitude and respect to all public servants who put their lives on the line daily to keep us safe. We also reaffirm our commitment to honoring those lost in the Key Bridge tragedy. I request that the committee give a favorable report on HB 1544.

Thank you

# **MCPA-MSA X HB 1544 - Law Enforcement Public Servic**

Uploaded by: Samira Jackson

Position: FAV



# Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

## Maryland Sheriffs' Association



### MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith Jr., Chair and  
Members of the Judicial Proceedings 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 25, 2025

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

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

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. This legislation aligns with our shared commitment to honoring those who go above and beyond in serving and protecting our communities.

The MCPA-MSA firmly believes that HB 1544 serves as a crucial step in reinforcing the respect and gratitude earned by Maryland's law enforcement officers. By formally recognizing those who have demonstrated extraordinary valor, selflessness, and commitment to public safety, this legislation not only honors individual officers but also fosters a culture of appreciation and support for the law enforcement community as a whole. The establishment of the Maryland Law Enforcement Public Service Medal underscores the state's dedication to acknowledging the sacrifices made by officers in the line of duty and ensuring their heroic contributions are never forgotten. For these reasons, MCPA-MSA **SUPPORT HB 1544** and urge a **FAVORABLE** committee report.