



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair and
Members of the House 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 25, 2025

RE: **HB 122 - Public Safety - Police Accountability - Police Officer Complainant**

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **OPPOSE HB 122**. Under HB 122, law enforcement officers will file complaints of misconduct with a police accountability board as opposed to allowing the investigating unit of the law enforcement agency to review and manage the complaint internally.

The proposed bill significantly undermines the authority of the Chief of Police or Sheriff by shifting disciplinary and investigative responsibilities to external entities, thereby diminishing the ability of law enforcement leadership to effectively manage their departments. By expanding the jurisdiction of police accountability boards to receive and process complaints from police officers themselves, the bill introduces an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy that removes critical decision-making from those most qualified to assess internal disciplinary matters. Chiefs and Sheriffs, as the individuals responsible for maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of their departments, must retain the ability to swiftly and appropriately handle internal complaints to ensure both accountability and operational efficiency.

When the General Assembly passed the current police accountability legislation, it clearly established distinct and separate processes for addressing internal complaints from officers and those involving the public. There is no justification for revisiting or altering this framework, particularly when doing so weakens the ability of department leadership to uphold standards of professional conduct. The existing system already ensures transparency and fairness in handling complaints, and the proposed changes risk creating confusion, delays, and diminished accountability. Rather than improving police oversight, this bill erodes the chain of command, complicates disciplinary procedures, and ultimately weakens the ability of law enforcement leaders to hold their officers accountable. The legislature should reject this bill in order to preserve the necessary authority of Chiefs and Sheriffs and maintain the accountability mechanisms already in place. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **OPPOSE 122** and urge an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report.