



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

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

RE: **HB 537 – Police Discipline – Order to Show Cause**

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **OPPOSE** HB 537.

The MCPA and MSA strongly support due process for officers and deputies; however, believe this information about the potential delays and impact on the police disciplinary reforms under the Police Accountability Act of 2021 should be seriously considered in evaluating HB 537.

Under the proposed Md. Code, Public Safety Article, §3-113.1, a police officer who is the subject of a disciplinary complaint or administrative investigation would be exempt from the usual “exhaustion of administrative remedies” legal doctrine and could go to Circuit Court and challenge unspecified aspects of an incipient investigative or disciplinary process “at any time before a hearing is held...” under the Police Accountability Act.

Prior court cases demonstrate that the disruptive effects of allowing initiation of preliminary “show cause” court challenges to police discipline suggest that investigation and processing of police misconduct complaints may typically be delayed by up to one or two years. (e.g. Gindlesperger v. Popkin, 426 Md. 1, 43 A.3d 347 (2012), pre-hearing comparative discipline discovery dispute, two year delay caused by Circuit Court show cause and appellate review).

Further, disciplinary matters have begun working their way through the administrative charging committee and trial board process. Making changes that would restore certain provisions of the prior disciplinary process seem premature when we do not yet have a great deal of experience under the new disciplinary process.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA urge an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 537.

532 Baltimore Boulevard, Suite 308
Westminster, Maryland 21157
667-314-3216 / 667-314-3236