



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 560: Criminal Law - Fraud - Possession of Residential Real Property

SPONSOR: Delegate Holmes

HEARING DATE: February 11, 2025 at 1:00PM

COMMITTEE: Judiciary

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: INFORMATIONAL ONLY

The office of the Acting Prince George's County Executive submits this letter of information regarding its position on **House Bill 560: Criminal Law - Fraud - Possession of Residential Real Property**, prohibiting a person from possessing or claiming a right to possess residential real property the person does not lawfully possess or own, with the intent to defraud another; authorizing the owner of certain residential real property to file a certain sworn affidavit and requiring a sheriff to remove a certain person from residential real property under certain circumstances; providing this Act does not prohibit the owner of residential real property from filing a wrongful detainer action; and generally relating to fraudulent possession of residential real property. This proposal places additional financial burden on Prince George's County.

At a time of added stress on public budgets, the proposed legislation will require additional staff, or potentially up to 28 Sheriff's Deputies, to enforce new regulations county-wide. The agency projects an expense of nearly \$4.7 million over the next 5 fiscal years to enforce the content of this proposal. Specifically, proposed additions under article 8-906, which will require deputy sheriffs to remove a person in possession of residential real property after receiving an affidavit stating that the person is fraudulently in possession of the property as well as returning the property to the owner. The agency currently experiences a staffing shortage, as such the current personnel cannot absorb the additional work without a significant increase in the agency's composition of Sheriff's Deputies. This is not an expense that the County Government is prepared to currently absorb.

While we understand the difficulties the Office of the Sheriff currently experiences and the expedience presented in this proposal, the Office of the Acting Prince George's County Executive cautions all parties to consider the very difficult fiscal realities now presented across all aspects of county government.