



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

House Bill 885

*Public Safety - Police Accountability - Investigation Records
Relating to Unfounded and Exonerated Complaints*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judiciary Committee

Date: February 25, 2025

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 885. This bill would allow for law enforcement officers with exonerated or unfounded claims, following a police misconduct investigation, to be expunged from a personnel record.

MACo has not opposed multiple proposals to promote accountability for law enforcement agencies and officers, including the broad, landmark Maryland legislation enacted in 2021. Each county is currently acting in good faith to facilitate the mandated reforms to advance those policy goals, at substantial local expense. Counties are allies and functioning partners in ensuring officer accountability.

At the same time, staffing shortages have created complications across many sectors. However, few pose as dire and as immediate a threat to public safety as shortages in law enforcement personnel. Vacancies, in conjunction with the percentage of employees eligible for retirement, paint an even more disturbing picture of the breadth of this crisis. The provisions of HB 885 could help not only recruit more officers into the profession, but also keep qualified officers in the field.

County law enforcement officers are on the ground every day facing evolving challenges head-on – they are actively experiencing the results of a declining workforce juxtaposed with the increasing needs and challenges of their communities. These day-to-day, lived experiences of local law enforcement are invaluable in solving this staffing crisis, as theirs is the clearest lens through which to bring these issues into focus for a capable, diverse, and well-meaning workforce. Making sure these officers are accountable and encouraged to continue doing this work is vital.

Counties support the willingness to focus attention on the need to bolster law enforcement officer recruitment efforts and accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 885.