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Maryland State Lodge
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KENNY SCHUBERT
SECRETARY

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March 17, 2026

HB 0696 - State Prescription Drug Benefits – Retirees

Dear Chairman Barnes and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

The Maryland State Fraternal Order of Police **SUPPORTS** House Bill 0696 - **State Prescription Drug Benefits – Retirees**.

Effective December 31, 2024, the State discontinued the prescription drug benefits for Medicare-eligible retirees, Medicare-eligible spouses or surviving spouses of a retiree, and a Medicare-eligible dependent child or surviving dependent child of a retiree. **HB 0696** will make it so that this new policy will only apply to a retiree who began State service on or after July 1, 2011.

The 2011 Pension Reform bill initially sought this change for retirees who qualified for Medicare Part D coverage to take effect in 2019. Delays, due to legal action, brought us to 2024 when the State did not pass that year's version of this bill, HB 0670, which therefore, put this new policy in place on January 1, 2025, as all Court Case actions involving this policy had come to their final conclusions. This action now for the past year has negatively affected many of our retirees. The issue with this by the membership of the FOP is that neither the pension reform bill, nor this policy, considered when the retiree was hired or what the terms of their benefits package that they agreed to were when they were hired. Prior to the 2011 Pension reform bill, employees were hired with the promise of specific pension and health benefits for life. This included the Prescription plan. To remove the benefit that was promised we feel is a breach of that contract and a disservice to those that have faithfully served the State and fulfilled their obligations to qualify for those lifetime benefits. For those hired after the Pension Reform of 2011, while we don't agree with this change, understand that these employees would have known or been told to expect the changes that they now face.

All this has occurred at a time when the State is facing historic financial hardships and ever increasing utility and other bills and fees that are negatively affecting the retirees of this State. Retirees are now faced with attempting to navigate life while living on fixed incomes where actions such as this, and many others made by the State, will continue to cause increases to their mandatory expenses which will have detrimental effects on them. For many retirees, if **HB 0696** is not enacted, the change will continue to bring higher costs for their prescriptions and compound the other financial burdens that to this day continue to burden and harm them now and well into the future.

On behalf of the more than 20,000 Courageous Men and Women of the Maryland Fraternal Order of Police we thank you for your support and ask for your **FAVORABLE** vote on **House Bill 0696 - State Prescription Drug Benefits – Retirees**.

Angelo L. Consoli Jr.
2nd Vice President, FOP, Maryland State Lodge
Immediate Past President, FOP Lodge 89, Prince George's County