



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Maryland General Assembly – 2026 Session

Testimony of Delegate Derrick L. Coley – District 24

Support of House Bill 872

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes, and Vice- Chair Kaiser, and esteemed Members of this Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 872. My name is Derrick Coley, and I am proud to sponsor this bill. I respectfully submit this testimony on behalf of the City of Seat Pleasant, in **strong support of House Bill 872.**

House Bill 872 provides a clear and equitable pathway for eligible local law enforcement officers to participate in the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS) should the Seat Pleasant Police Department become a participating governmental unit. The bill also appropriately recognizes and preserves previously earned eligibility and creditable service for certain officers prior to the department's participation. These provisions are critical to ensuring fairness, workforce stability, and continuity of public safety.

First, HB 872 promotes parity and fairness in retirement benefits for municipal law enforcement personnel. Local police officers perform the same essential public safety functions as their county and state counterparts. Providing access to LEOPS ensures that officers in Seat Pleasant are not disadvantaged in retirement security simply because of their municipal affiliation. Establishing consistency in pension participation across

jurisdictions strengthens morale and reinforces the value Maryland places on all law enforcement professionals.

Second, the bill enhances recruitment and retention of qualified officers. Municipal police departments across Maryland face increasing competition for experienced personnel. Access to a stable and predictable pension system such as LEOPS is a critical factor for officers considering long-term service. By enabling participation in the system and recognizing prior service credit, **HB 872** will help the Seat Pleasant Police Department retain experienced officers, reduce turnover, and maintain continuity in community policing and public safety operations.

Third, recognizing eligibility and creditable service earned prior to participation reflects sound public policy and respect for service already rendered. Officers who have dedicated years of service to protecting residents should not lose recognition of that service due to administrative or structural changes in pension participation. HB 872 ensures that these officers receive appropriate credit, reinforcing Maryland's commitment to fairness and honoring public service.

Finally, this legislation supports long-term organizational stability and planning for the City of Seat Pleasant. Providing a clear statutory framework for LEOPS participation allows the City to responsibly plan for workforce sustainability, pension obligations, and public safety service delivery. Stable and supported law enforcement agencies directly contribute to safer communities and stronger municipal governance.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 872. This legislation represents a practical, fair, and forward-looking step that supports local law enforcement officers while strengthening public safety in our community and across Maryland. Thank you for your time and consideration.