

## Testimony on SB0647: Law Enforcement - Catastrophic Injury Disability

**Position: UNFAVORABLE**

**Committee:** House Appropriations

**Date:** Wednesday, April 8, 2026

### **The Statement:**

"Good afternoon, Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Nicole McDonald. I'm a mother from Baltimore and a former correctional worker.

I'm here to testify **UNFAVORABLE** on SB0647 because the double standard in this bill is staggering. I have been **seriously injured on the job several times** myself. I know what it's like to put your body on the line for this state and to have to live with those injuries every single day.

But I cannot support a bill that picks favorites. We are talking about fast-tracking a 100% 'platinum' payout for life for police, but where is that same energy for the people they harm? When officers kill or seriously injure people in our streets, the system doesn't fast-track consequences—half the time they don't face any at all, and the victims certainly aren't compensated for their lives. **So why are the police lives more valuable?**

The state is treating these payouts like they're doing a huge favor, but the reality is they're treating workers' earned pensions like a personal piggy bank they can dip into whenever they feel like it. Why is an officer's life or comfort worth 100% of their salary, but the lives they take or the families they leave behind aren't worth the same effort? Why isn't a teacher's life worth 100%? Why isn't a social worker's?

Every public-facing job is dangerous now. We have training and safety measures put in place for a reason. If they are trained, why is this happening? You want to talk about 'losing money,' but the state isn't losing anything. You have a **Rainy Day Fund with \$2.2 billion** sitting in it. Y'all don't have a problem managing that money, do you? But you make our seniors struggle for pennies on their pensions and make them wait until they are old and can't do anything anymore to get what they earned.

**Since when did we become so comfortable as a state openly valuing people's lives differently?** You want to fast-track 100% for a group that already has the most protection in the world, while everyone else gets 66%. They are doing a job they were trained for, just like everyone else. This isn't just about who is serving the state, but about who the state is **disserving**.

If you don't want to give this to the police, you need to give it to **everybody**—all the workers and all the people who the state has caused harm to. Why is one group less than, or not thought about, while the other is put on a pedestal? Stop picking and choosing. If you aren't ready to give

this same 100% to every single person who is seriously injured or harmed by this state, then you shouldn't be giving it to anyone. This is one-sided, it is not equal, and it is not justice.

Thank you.