

Mr. Chairman, Most Honorable Delegates, of the Appropriations Committee and all interested parties,

Sarah Mastronardi, retired First Sergeant Maryland State Police
President of the State Police Alumni Association

Our retirees, many in their eighties, were not prepared for this. Not only are many not technology savvy, but many have physical impairments that have challenged them with signing up to the new plan. We have retirees receiving a monthly retirement check under poverty level. Our retirees hired before 1987, were not offered or paid into SS. This unique, most vulnerable group of state retirees are the ones that are most adversely affected by the loss of the prescription drug plan. They are seniors and many are disabled.

Let me be clear, our Troopers today are compensated in a manner comparable to today's society. Even though I believe that our Troopers should receive Hazardous duty pay, that is for another conversation. Many of the folks I am representing were hired with a starting salary of \$7700 a year. It is those ageing retirees that face an overwhelming deficit as they attempt to budget their prescription drug plan today. Many have adapted to the new plans that have been offered. Some are satisfied. They appreciated the debit card that assist with some co-pays. These steps to assist our state retirees still do not compensate for the monthly premiums that all must face. Some of these prescription providers have increased their premiums to 100%. While our retirees still live on the same limited financial budget.

I hate that many of our retirees must decide whether to get their prescription or pay their electric bill. One of my retirees left his needed heart medication on the counter as the clerk asked for over \$300 for a one-month prescription as it was not in the formulary of drugs offered by his prescription plan.

Our retirees were the ones that ran toward danger, answered the call. They reported to work in snow, ice, and sleet. They worked to serve the citizens of Maryland. It should be our responsibility to uplift these retirees. Any benefit available through your votes to help our disabled and seniors would greatly be appreciated.

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