



**State Law Enforcement  
Officers Labor Alliance**  
542 Ritchie Highway  
Severna Park, Maryland 21146



March 25, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes  
Chair, Appropriations Committee  
121 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: SB 654 – State Police Retirement System – Mandatory Retirement Age – Alteration  
Oppose**

Dear Chair Barnes:

The State Law Enforcement Labor Alliance (SLEOLA) is the exclusive representative for 1,757 active state law enforcement officers including the Maryland State Police. We are writing in opposition to Senate Bill 654.

I would like to formally address several concerns regarding this bill. We acknowledge that the recruitment and retention of qualified officers have become a significant challenge within law enforcement. However, Senate Bill 654 fails to address the underlying issues with recruitment and retention; instead, it will create a bottleneck for promotions and transfers to specialized divisions. Senate Bill 654 is expected to retain aging officers, typically those in higher-ranking positions, but this will negatively impact the promotions and transfers of minorities and enhance existing challenges related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The retention of a single major, for example, could potentially impede the promotion of six individuals, and the retention of one captain could delay the advancement of five individuals. Therefore, retaining just two individuals could negatively affect the promotion prospects of up to eleven people while also blocking two potential new hires.

States in our region have similar mandatory retirement ages for their state police: Delaware and New Jersey set their mandatory retirement age at 55; New York State Police and Pennsylvania have a retirement age of 60.

It is inevitable that many issues arise with aging: slower reflexes, reaction time, reduced strength. Another concern of SLEOLA is that while I am personally included in the 22-year retirement, newer troopers have a 25 year retirement. State Police officers work in a high stress demanding job, and we are rewarded with an enhanced pension and lower years of service. Requiring Troopers to work as long as other State employees may open up the requirement of having our pensions aligned to those with a 30-year pension.

In 2019, the US Government Accountability Office looked into raising the retirement age for US Capitol Police from 57 to 60. OPM officials noted that if the mandatory retirement age was increased, the original rationale behind why officers should pay higher employee deductions and receive enhanced benefits may be undermined.

In 2022, there were 29 Trooper resignations, in 2023 there were 21 resignations, and in 2024 there were 20 resignations. SLEOLA believes it is critical to identify and address why Troopers are leaving, and to identify better options to ensure retention.

Looking at the future, the main indicator of why a Trooper retires is not age, it is the DROP. This is the primary reason most stay beyond their 22 or 25 years of service.

<b>Maryland Trooper Retirements</b>	
2026	21
2027	21
2028	21
2029	27
2030	31
2031	19
2032	31
2033	2

Only a small number of Troopers stay until age 60. If the retirement age is increased, it will not address this issue as there are actually very few Troopers approaching 60. A majority time the DROP so they will retire when they turn 60.

Senate Bill 654 did not add the DROP and will not benefit the 177 troopers currently in the DROP.

SLEOLA would propose that the State Police and our leadership work together and introduce legislation in 2027 that all parties can agree on.

For these reasons, SLEOLA urges the Committee to give SB 654 an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

Brian Gill  
President

cc: Members, House Appropriations Committee