

Written Testimony on Senate Bill 0766

The Honorable Dr Cashenna A Cross
Councilwoman at Large, City of Glenarden, Maryland
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Position: Favorable with Amendments

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony based on my experience as a municipal elected official, a veteran with operational public safety experience, and a community leader who regularly works alongside local law enforcement agencies responsible for maintaining public trust while protecting public spaces.

Senate Bill 0766 proposes to expand the jurisdiction and enforcement authority of the Maryland Capitol Police to operate statewide with enhanced police powers related to state owned and state leased facilities and surrounding areas. The goal of improving protection of public buildings and infrastructure is understandable and important. Maryland residents expect safety in and around public facilities, and coordinated security efforts can support that objective.

However, the expansion of statewide authority raises practical and governance concerns for municipalities and counties that already maintain primary responsibility for public safety within their jurisdictions. Local police departments are accountable to residents through local leadership, established response protocols, and community relationships that have been built over time. Any expansion of authority must preserve coordination, clarity of command, and transparency.

From a municipal perspective, overlapping jurisdiction without clear guardrails may create operational confusion during incidents, duplication of enforcement activity, and uncertainty regarding accountability. Local governments must remain informed partners whenever enforcement activity occurs within their boundaries.

For these reasons, I respectfully support Senate Bill 0766 with amendments designed to strengthen coordination and public confidence while maintaining the intent of enhanced safety.

Recommended Amendments

First, require formal coordination protocols between Maryland Capitol Police and local law enforcement agencies prior to exercising expanded authority except in immediate emergency circumstances.

Second, establish clear reporting requirements documenting when statewide authority is exercised, including notification timelines and incident summaries shared with affected municipalities or counties.

Third, require joint training and operational guidance to ensure consistent procedures across agencies and prevent conflicting enforcement actions.

Fourth, include periodic legislative reporting to evaluate outcomes, operational impacts, and effectiveness of expanded jurisdiction.

These amendments reflect a balanced approach. Public safety is strengthened when authority is paired with accountability and collaboration. Maryland communities benefit most when state and local agencies operate as coordinated partners rather than overlapping systems.

My record in municipal leadership has consistently supported responsible governance that protects both safety and public trust. This position reflects that same principle. With thoughtful amendments, Senate Bill 0766 can improve protection of public assets while preserving the transparency and coordination that residents expect.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honorable Dr Cashenna A Cross
Councilwoman at Large
City of Glenarden Maryland