

**2026 SB768 testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jason Dykes

Position: FAV

Cpl. Jason Dykes  
Maryland State Police  
Senate Bill 768 - Support

For the record, my name is Jason Dykes. I currently serve as a corporal in the Maryland State Police and have served in law enforcement in Maryland for 30 years.

I respectfully am requesting a transfer of my prior service with the Salisbury Police Department to the State Retirement and Pension System through Senate Bill 768.

As way of background, I have been working in good faith to resolve this matter for the past several years when I began the process of attempting to purchase my nearly 10 years of service with the Salisbury Police Department more than a decade ago. My time with SPD was credited under a state combined pension system (MACLEO) that no longer exists. Eventually I received a phone call stating that I was not able to purchase my SPD time due to a break in service as my time with the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office, which is not under a state retirement system. At that time, I was not given information regarding appeal options before the SRPS.

In 2015, I contacted local Senators and Delegates for guidance and assistance in this matter and was advised to work directly with the staff from the State Retirement and Pension System. After considerable communications, I was told that my time with the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office was a break in service greater than 30 days and that I was ineligible to buy my nearly decade of service back.

Also in 2015, I contacted then President of the Maryland Troopers Association, Kirk Daugherty, for assistance in possibly pursuing the buy-back/roll over option. President Daugherty put me in touch with Richard Norman, SRPS Board of Trustees Member. He informed me that SRPS has considered breaks in service over 30 days for approval of transfer of service.

Given the lack of awareness and transparency on this point, and inconsistent application of COMAR, President Daugherty put me in touch with the MTA attorney, Rebecca Smith. Through Rebecca Smith's

representation, eventually, I was denied by SRPS again. SRPS referenced COMAR as the reason for my ineligibility.

I discovered, not via SRPS, that I could request a hearing and if that failed, I could appeal. Both of which I did. Although I was represented at this hearing by my attorney, I was unable to personally present my appeal due to the fact I was attending the funeral of WCSO Cpl. Hilliard who was killed in the line of duty. Ms. Smith advised me that my request was denied; however, she further indicated that Comptroller Franchot (a member of SRPS at the time) shared with my attorney that he was sympathetic of the situation and advised pursuing a legislative bill as my State Senator has offered to do given that I have exhausted non-legislative actions to resolve this matter.

In 2022, I began working with Senator Carozza on this matter. After consulting and working with senior SRPS personnel for the past couple of years, Senator Carozza agreed to sponsor a transfer of service bill.

I've been a lifelong resident of Maryland. I have been a LEO in this state since 1996 (I started in 1994 as a Cadet with SPD). My SPD time is vested and is in a state system. I receive my MSP retirement information from SRPS, as well as my SPD retirement information.

I am unable to understand how a law enforcement officer serving out of state with a break in service is eligible and I am not. I cannot fathom why I'm being penalized for dedicating a 30-year career in Maryland as LEO by not being able to purchase my time of service.

I am not asking for something that's not mine, nor something that's not there nor something that I have not earned. I understand that I will pay out of pocket or take a deficit in retirement percentage to rollover my time.

During my career, I have served in numerous roles from a road patrol officer, to an officer on the fugitive warrant unit, a mounted patrol officer, a detective, an undercover narcotics investigator and a current member of the MSP Digital Forensic Lab. I have had two incidents in my career where I've been shot at by suspects, both of whom ultimately shot themselves, including one of whom I exchanged gunfire with. I attended two funerals for two LEO's, WCSO Cpl. Glenn Hilliard and Delmar Police Cpl. Keith

Heacock, both whom I have known for many years and both losing their lives in the line of duty.

During a time when this Maryland General Assembly has focused on the recruitment and retention of dedicated law enforcement, I am only asking to be treated fairly, and in a way that is transparent and consistent with other approvals that have been made in the past.

Thank you for your time, and I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 768.

**SB 768 - Carozza Testimony\_FINAL.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mary Beth Carozza

Position: FAV

MARY BETH CAROZZA  
Legislative District 38  
Somerset, Wicomico,  
and Worcester Counties

Education, Energy, and  
the Environment Committee

Executive Nominations Committee



Annapolis Office  
James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 316  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3645 • 301-858-3645  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3645  
Fax 410-841-3006 • 301-858-3006  
MaryBeth.Carozza@senate.state.md.us

**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

**February 19, 2026**

**The Senate Budget and Taxation Pensions Subcommittee**  
**SB 768 – State Retirement and Pension System – Transfer of Service**  
**Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza**

Thank you Chair Lewis-Young and members of the distinguished Pensions Subcommittee for this opportunity to present Senate Bill 768 – State Retirement and Pension System – Transfers of Service.

This narrowly-focused bill would allow a former member of the Local Fire and Police Retirement System (LFPRS) who is an active member of the State Police Retirement System (SPRS) and incurred a break in service to transfer his service from the LFPRS to the SRPS. There is no fiscal impact.

Only one individual, Corporal Jason Dykes with the Maryland State Police, is eligible for SB 768. This individual served for 10 years at a municipal police department and during that time contributed to LFPRS, which no longer exists. The individual then served one year at a county sheriff's department which is not under the State Retirement System, before serving 21 years with the Maryland State Police as of next month where he continues to contribute to the SRPS.

The State Retirement and Pension System considers his service at the county law enforcement level to be a break in service, thereby SRPS has denied a buy back option for the almost decade of service at the municipal police department.

In 2005, when this individual was hired by the Maryland State Police, he was not informed that his county law enforcement service was considered a break in service and was not given information from either MSP or the State Retirement System about his options to buy back his municipal law enforcement service for the transfer to his State Police Retirement Service.

In 2012, this law enforcement officer first looked into purchasing his municipal time to apply to his State Police Retirement Service. For over 12 years, this law enforcement officer has been attempting through non-legislative means to rectify the situation. He has worked with staff from the State Retirement and Pension System, received representation from the Maryland Troopers Association, requested a hearing with the State Retirement and Pension System Board, and

appealed that hearing's decision. He was unable to personally present his appeal as he was attending the funeral of Corporal Glenn Hilliard (Wicomico County Sheriff's Office), a fallen law enforcement officer who was killed in the line of duty. However, his representative from the Maryland Troopers Association informed him that the former Comptroller, who was chair of the State Retirement and Pension System at the time, advised pursuing legislation to address this specific matter.

Last year, the State Retirement and Pension System opposed this bill and noted that this bill "would open the door to any individual who had more than a 30-day break in service between membership with State or local retirement or pension systems."

However, the fiscal note states that "SRA is aware of one individual who is definitively eligible for a transfer of service under this bill. Accordingly, the bill has limited applicability. Even though another 30 active members of LFPS may likewise be eligible, they must already be (or become) members of SRPS after a break-in service and request the transfer of credit before the bill's December 31, 2026 termination date."

I would also like to address another point brought up in the State Retirement's opposition testimony. It states that "this Committee has taken the position that legislation of this nature should demonstrate that some mistake by the State or the Agency occurred that now needs to be remedied... the Agency could find no evidence of any mistake or misinformation that was provided to the member by the State or the Agency."

I respectfully ask this Subcommittee to consider that omission, or the failure to provide information by the Maryland State Police and the Maryland Retirement Agency to the affected individual, contributed to my constituent's current predicament. In follow-up information that my constituent has provided to me over the years, it is clear that my constituent has made numerous requests for information from the Maryland State Police and the State Retirement Agency to understand his options for transferring his service, buying back his time and requesting assistance to resolve this matter. Unfortunately, we have been unable to resolve this matter and again I am sponsoring legislation to resolve this matter on behalf of my constituent.

In addition, immediately following the 2025 hearing, I spoke to the representative from the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System who offered to provide options to my constituent regarding the possibility of either buying or accessing his service from the local level for his Maryland State Police retirement contingent upon his retirement or departure from MSP. On behalf of my constituent, I again have requested that the State Retirement Agency provide options to my constituent in resolving this matter.

I respectfully am requesting that this Committee consider the failure of State agencies to provide information to my constituent over the years to move forward with SB 768 this session. This Committee has taken the position that legislation of this nature should demonstrate that some mistake by the State or the Agency occurred, and I contend that the failure of State agencies to provide information to my constituent when he was seeking assistance to transfer his service from the Local Fire and Police Plan to the State Retirement System meets your test for giving a favorable report to SB 768.

My constituent was not only not informed about transferring his service from the outset, but through every step of the process since 2012, virtually everything he has learned through this process has been a result of his own due diligence, not by information provided by State agencies.

As noted by SRA and in the fiscal note, only one law enforcement officer would be eligible for this transfer of service bill. Please consider how this individual has served Maryland honorably as a law enforcement professional for 30 years and continues to do so today. In 2023 he was awarded the Superintendent's Citation and received the 2022 Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. He was previously nominated for Trooper of the Year in 2014 and in 2006, as well as being nominated for the 2006 Medal of Honor through the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association.

He has served in numerous roles from a road patrol officer to an officer on the fugitive warrant unit, a mounted patrol officer, a detective, an undercover narcotics investigator and a current member of the Maryland State Police Digital Forensic Lab. This law enforcement officer often goes above and beyond the call of duty to help our community. He is an exemplary officer and often puts his own needs on hold to support others.

The fiscal note highlights that the legislation "has no discernible effect on State pension liabilities or contribution rates. No effect on revenues."

As noted, my constituent has been working for years with the State Retirement and Pension System and others to resolve this situation. I again am sponsoring this bill which allows my constituent to transfer his service from the Local Fire and Police Retirement System to the State Police Retirement and Pension System in order to resolve this matter this session.

I thank you for your kind attention and consideration, and I respectfully request a favorable and very swift report on SB 768.

# **SB768 Waiver of Transfer of Service Credit Provisi**

Uploaded by: Anne Gawthrop

Position: UNF



**Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 768  
State Retirement and Pension System – Transfers of Service**

**Senate Budget and Tax Committee  
February 19, 2026  
9:00 A.M.**

**Anne Gawthrop  
Director of Legislative Affairs  
State Retirement Agency**

The Board of Trustees for the State Retirement and Pension System (System) wishes to express its opposition to Senate Bill 768, State Retirement and Pension System – Transfers of Service Credit. Senate Bill 768 would allow an individual who had more than a 30-day break in employment between employment with participating employers of the System, to transfer their service from the Local Fire and Police Plan to the State Police Retirement System.

Title 37 of the State Personnel and Pensions Article governs transfers of service credit between State or local retirement or pension systems. Specifically, it provides that transfers of service credit between a State or local retirement or pension system may only take place when a member has become a member of a new State or local retirement or pension system without incurring any break in employment from their previous system. A break in employment has been interpreted as not more than 30 days between the individual leaving their old position and starting their new position. For individuals who have a greater than 30-day break in service, provisions of the State Personnel and Pensions Article allow members to purchase their prior service at the time of retirement.

While the State Retirement Agency is only aware of one individual who meets the criteria under the provisions of Senate Bill 768, this bill would open the door to any individual who had more than a 30-day break in service between membership with State or local retirement or pension systems, to allow them to transfer their previous service into their current plan without having to utilize the normal service purchase rules which generally require the member to fund the additional benefits due on account of the purchased service. Allowing a Title 37 transfer under Senate Bill 768 could potentially increase unfunded liabilities for the new system and would allow the member to avoid paying the costs for the additional service credit, as is required of all other members when purchasing service credit under the same circumstances.

Additionally, we think it is important to note that in the past, this Committee has taken the position that legislation of this nature should demonstrate that some mistake by the State or the Agency occurred that now needs to be remedied. As we mentioned above, the Agency is currently only aware of one individual who would meet the criteria of the bill, and after reviewing the facts surrounding their situation, the Agency could find no evidence of any mistake or misinformation that was provided to the individual by the State or the Agency. Senate Bill 768 would provide a special exception to the provisions of Title 37 of

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the State Personnel and Pensions Article for this individual to which no other member of the System is entitled.

While the Agency can appreciate the frustration the individual is experiencing by being unable to accomplish the goal of combining his creditable service in the Local Fire and Police System (LFP) with his current account in the State Police Retirement System (SPRS), the Committee should be made aware of the extensive correspondence and conversations the Agency has had with this individual and internally in an attempt to assist the individual. This is a discussion that began in 2005 and has included an appeal by the individual to the Board of Trustees for the System. The Board upheld the position of the Agency, that the individual was not eligible to transfer his service from the LFP into the SPRS. Through numerous conversations, the Agency and the individual also explored potential options that would enable the individual to purchase his LFP service while a member of the SPRS. The Agency has also met internally several times to discuss any viable solutions that would allow the individual to purchase this service. Unfortunately, due to the specific facts surrounding this individual's case, the Agency has concluded there is no path forward to move the individual's LFP service into the SPRS. Nevertheless, the individual will not lose any of the LFP creditable service that he has earned. The individual is currently eligible to receive his SPRS retirement benefit and will be eligible to begin receiving his LFP benefit once he reaches age 62.

We appreciate being given the opportunity to raise these issues with the Committee and stand ready to provide any further information or services the Committee might request regarding Senate Bill 768.