

MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

*Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel
-a 501(c)3 Organization*



Legislative Committee

Dale Bowen

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March 10, 2026

RE: HB 1156

Delegate Melissa Wells
Chair
Delegate Kenneth Kerr
Vice Chair
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland State Firefighters Association Legislative Committee and the Calvert County Fire, Rescue, and EMS Association, I respectfully submit this testimony in support of HB 1156 – Calvert County – Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) – Benefits.

I am currently in my 40th year of service with the Huntingtown Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad in Calvert County. During my time in the volunteer fire service, I have had the honor of serving as President of the Huntingtown Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad and as President of the Southern Maryland Volunteer Firemen's Association. I have also served as a Recruitment and Retention Coordinator for the Maryland State Firefighters Association.

Across Maryland, the volunteer fire and EMS service continues to face significant challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified first responders. The Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) remains one of the most important tools available to help recognize and retain the dedicated volunteers who serve their communities.

Providing a death or burial benefit for our volunteers is a meaningful way to honor their commitment and sacrifice. As you know, the cost of funeral services has increased significantly since the current benefit levels were established in law.

HB 1156 would increase the death or burial benefit from \$10,000 to \$14,000 for members who have provided a minimum of 25 years of service. It would also increase the benefit for members with less than 25 years of service from \$336 to \$560 per year of service.

This modest adjustment helps ensure that the program continues to provide a meaningful benefit for the volunteers who dedicate years of their lives to protecting the citizens of Calvert County.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 1156.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dale Bowen

Past President, HVFD & RS

Past President, SMVFA

MSFA Legislative Committee