

Baltimore City Sheriff's Office

Samuel Cogen, Sheriff

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TO: The Honorable Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Nicholas T.R. Blendy, Esq., Assistant Sheriff, Baltimore City Sheriff's Office

RE: House Bill 503 – Baltimore City Sheriff's Office – Collective Bargaining – Compensation

DATE: March 31, 2026

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Sheriff's Office (BCSO) supports House Bill (HB) 503.

HB 503, if enacted, is intended to clarify that the exclusive representative bargaining unit within the BCSO for full time sworn law enforcement officers and court security officer—which is currently recognized as the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 22 (FOP 22)—has the authority to bargain wages as part of the three-party FOP 22 labor contract with the BCSO and the City of Baltimore (City).

During the past two negotiations between the parties for FOP 22 contract there has been disagreement between the three parties about whether FOP 22 has the authority to negotiate salary and wages as part of the process. By enacting HB 503, this issue will be put to rest and make clear that FOP 22 would have the authority to bargain salary, wages, and merit step increases as part of labor negotiations. It is the BCSO's position that this authority is the foundational right of labor unions, and a right that Sheriff Cogen fully supports.

This same bill was introduced during the last session of the General Assembly as 2025 House Bill 1091. As currently before you, HB 503 is in the same posture as the final version of that bill. The BCSO respectfully requests that this committee please authorize the expansion of FOP 22's right to bargain collectively to include the rights to bargain salary, wages, and merit step increases, as provided in HB 503.

For the foregoing reasons, the BCSO respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 503.