



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Samira Jackson, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 17, 2026

RE: **SB 516 - Law Enforcement - Protective Body Armor - Requirements and Reporting**

POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT SB 516 WITH AMENDMENTS**. The bill's core purpose is to ensure that law enforcement officers across Maryland have access to up-to-date, compliant protective body armor. Officer safety is of the utmost importance. Members of law enforcement face unpredictable and dangerous situations every day, and properly maintained body armor is one of the most basic and essential tools available to reduce preventable injuries and deaths in the line of duty.

While we strongly support the bill's intent, we respectfully request amendments to the reporting and penalty provisions as currently drafted. SB 516 includes requirements for notification to the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission and establishes enforcement mechanisms that could result in the freezing of grant funding administered through the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention (GOCPP).

Our concern is that freezing GOCPP administered grant funds, including Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant ([BJAG](#)) supported officer safety resources, could have the unintended consequence of limiting access to the very funding streams agencies rely on to purchase and replace body armor. Withholding these funds would directly undermine the bill's purpose by reducing departments' ability to keep protective equipment current and compliant. Local agencies already operate under significant budget constraints, and punitive funding restrictions would be counterproductive to improving officer safety. Further, requiring up to date body armor is a requirement in most, if not all, agencies' current policy. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT SB 516 WITH AMENDMENTS** and urge a **FAVORABLE** report.