



**TOWN OF HANCOCK, MARYLAND**  
126 W. High St., Hancock, MD 21750



February 20, 2026

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Town of Hancock, we respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of **Senate Bill 746**. This legislation addresses a real and costly gap in current law that disproportionately impacts small municipal police departments and the communities they serve.

SB 746 was introduced following a recent situation faced by the Town of Hancock, where the Town confronted the possibility of spending between \$10,000 and \$50,000 to continue paying salary and benefits to a police officer during the pendency of an appeal, even after a trial board had rendered a decision. For a small town with a limited operating budget, this level of unplanned expense is significant and unsustainable.

Under current law, a municipal police chief may suspend an officer without pay only in narrow circumstances. However, once a trial board issues a decision and an appeal is filed, municipalities are left with no clear authority to suspend without pay during the appeal process, even when the trial board has already determined that discipline is warranted. SB 746 provides a narrow, reasonable solution by allowing a municipal chief to suspend an officer without pay during the appeal period, while explicitly protecting the officer's rights by requiring full back pay if the officer ultimately prevails on appeal.

For small towns like Hancock, this is not about punishment, it is about fiscal responsibility and fairness. Municipalities must continue to fund public safety operations, infrastructure, and essential services while absorbing the financial risk of prolonged appeals. Unlike larger jurisdictions, small towns do not have the reserves to absorb these costs without cutting services or delaying critical investments.

The fiscal note correctly notes that the bill is expected to apply in a limited number of cases and is not anticipated to significantly impact municipal finances statewide.

However, when these cases do arise, the impact on a small town can be severe. SB 746 provides local governments with a responsible tool to manage that risk while maintaining due process protections for officers.



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Importantly, SB 746 preserves the integrity of Maryland's police accountability framework. It does not alter the trial board process, appeal rights, or evidentiary standards. It simply ensures that municipalities are not forced to bear significant financial burdens during an appeal period when a trial board decision has already been issued.

For the Town of Hancock, and for small municipalities across Maryland, SB 746 represents a practical, balanced fix to a real problem. We respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 746.

Thank you for your consideration and for your attention to the challenges faced by Maryland's small towns.

Sincerely,

Michael Faith, Town Manager