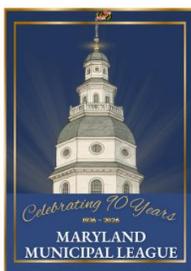


SB 516 - FWA - MML.pdf

Uploaded by: Angelica Bailey Thupari

Position: FWA



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: Senate Judicial Proceedings

DATE: February 17, 2026

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

BILL: SB 516

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) The Maryland Municipal League supports the intent of this legislation and appreciates the focus on officer safety. Ensuring that law enforcement officers are equipped with body armor that meets current National Institute of Justice (NIJ) ballistic resistance standards is a critical and appropriate public safety objective. Municipal police departments share the commitment to protecting the health and safety of their officers and the communities they serve.

The bill establishes clear requirements that law enforcement agencies issue compliant protective body armor to officers assigned to non-administrative duties, replace armor prior to expiration or manufacturer-recommended replacement dates, and maintain appropriate oversight and reporting. These expectations reflect best practices already followed by many municipal departments across the State.

However, the League respectfully requests amendments to address the enforcement structure tied to grant funding. As drafted, the bill requires reporting to the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission if armor is not replaced within 31 days of expiration, followed by notification to the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy and potential withholding of grant funds. Repeated noncompliance may result in the loss of grant eligibility for the following fiscal year.

While accountability is important, withholding or suspending all grant funds may have unintended consequences, particularly for small municipal departments with limited administrative staff and constrained procurement timelines. Body armor is typically custom-fitted, and replacement may depend on manufacturer lead times, supply chain delays, or changes in an officer's size requiring refitting. These logistical realities can create short, unavoidable gaps despite good-faith compliance efforts.

The League therefore respectfully suggests amendments that provide reasonable flexibility for documented procurement delays or fitting-related issues beyond an agency's control; allow corrective action periods prior to grant suspension; and tailor funding consequences to the specific program at issue, rather than broadly withholding all grant funding. With these adjustments, the bill would maintain strong safety standards while recognizing operational realities faced by municipal law enforcement agencies, and the Maryland Municipal League would respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 516.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

There are 88 municipal police departments and roughly 4,000 officers.

Angelica Bailey Thupari: Director, Advocacy and Public Policy, angelicab@mdmunicipal.org

MCPA-MSA SB 516 - Body Armor SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Samira Jackson

Position: FWA



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.

MSP Position on SB0516.pdf

Uploaded by: Breanna Mowbray

Position: INFO



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Unit
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: February 17, 2026

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 516 **POSITION:** Letter of Information

BILL TITLE: Law Enforcement - Protective Body Armor - Requirements and Reporting

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

This legislation seeks to restrict a law enforcement agency from assigning a law enforcement officer to duties other than administrative duties unless the officer is issued protective body armor. This proposal further requires a law enforcement agency to issue only protective body armor that meets the current National Institute of Justice Ballistic Resistance of Body Armor standards. A law enforcement agency shall replace a law enforcement officer's protective body armor prior to the body armor's expiration date.

The Department of Maryland State Police's (MDSP) standard procedure relating to issuance and replacement of protective body armor takes in to account that the standard expiration of this equipment is 5 years as per manufacturer recommendations. One year prior to expiration, the Department requires troopers to report to our Quartermaster Division for replacement vest fittings. Troopers receive their new armor prior to the five-year mark.

In accordance with the Department's recent agreement with the bargaining unit, SLEOLA, MDSP inspects body armor monthly. Any body armor that is identified as defective or unserviceable is replaced. MDSP maintains a stock of extra vests for immediate replacement should it be necessary.

The Maryland Department of State Police respectfully urges the Committee to consider the information contained in this letter while deliberating on Senate Bill 516.