



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Sandy Bartlett, Chair and
Members of the Judiciary 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: March 4, 2026

RE: **HB 686 - Vehicle Laws - Eluding Police - Penalties (Zoey's Law)**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT HB 686**. This bill strengthens the penalties for individuals who attempt to elude law enforcement and, in doing so, cause the death of another person. Fleeing from police is not a minor traffic offense, it is a deliberate act that creates extreme danger for officers, motorists, pedestrians, and entire communities. When that decision results in the loss of life, the law should reflect the gravity of that harm.

High-speed eluding incidents are among the most volatile and dangerous situations officers encounter. Even when officers act with restraint and in accordance with pursuit policies, a suspect's reckless decision to flee can have irreversible consequences. By clarifying and strengthening the felony penalties associated with fatal eluding incidents, HB 686 reinforces accountability and underscores that choosing to flee from law enforcement is a serious criminal act with potentially tragic consequences. For these reasons, MCPA-MSA **SUPPORT HB 686** and urge a **FAVORABLE** committee report.