



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

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: February 24, 2026

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 464 **Position: Oppose**

BILL TITLE: Criminal Procedure - No-Knock Search Warrants - Repeal

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:

This legislation seeks to repeal the court's authority to issue no-knock search warrants. The bill repeals the authority of the police officer, with the state's attorney's approval, to apply for a no-knock warrant. A law enforcement officer attempting to serve a search warrant is required to announce the officer's purpose and authority. This legislation also mandates that law enforcement wait 20 seconds before entering certain areas to be searched, and must provide reasonable notice to inform any occupants of their authority and purpose.

Under current law, a law enforcement officer may apply for a no-knock search warrant if the application meets a certain criterion and is reviewed and approved by a supervisor and the local state's attorney. The provision of law regarding the legality of no-knock warrants is based on the case law in *Richards v. Wisconsin* and was upheld by the United States Supreme Court. The Court, however, did not grant unilateral authority to waive the knock-and-announce requirement. The Court ruled that the state supreme court's blanket exception to the knock-and-announce requirement, that police officers were never required to knock and announce their presence when executing a search warrant in a felony drug investigation, was unconstitutional. The ruling was affirmed in *United States v. Ramirez*.

The Maryland State Police (MSP) uses the "No Knock" warrant in very specific circumstances, and the warrants are executed only by a highly trained team within the Department. The circumstances that the Department uses to determine if a warrant will be served as a "No Knock":

- Criminal history of the primary suspect(s);
- Felony nature of the crime being investigated;
- Is there an arrest warrant for the primary suspect (is it for a crime of violence)?
- Ability to destroy evidence;
- Fortification of the structure;
- Terrain to be traversed to get to the structure;
- Is a surreptitious approach possible?
- Are there other articulable reasons why it is necessary to remain unknown to the suspect until the time of the service; and
- Is it safer for the suspects as well as the officers involved to contact them (Knock and Announce) prior to them realizing we are present?

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

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

All requests for “No Knock” warrants are screened by a member of the Special Operations Division (SOD). Either a team leader or a Unit Commander conducts the screening based on the available information. Once a decision has been made, the SOD Command staff is notified before a final decision is made. In all cases, the warrant team is briefed by the local investigators to ensure the most current and useful information is known. For example, if investigators on surveillance contact the lead investigator and advise that they observed the subject leaving the premises or that the subject has already been detained, they will downgrade the “No Knock” to a “Knock and Announce”.

The use of a “No Knock” warrant is designed and executed to minimize the risk to both the officers serving the warrant and the residents who are subject to the warrant. Eliminating all “No Knock” warrants could have a detrimental effect on both groups.

For these reasons, the Maryland State Police urges the Committee to give House Bill 464 an unfavorable report.