



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair
and Members of the House 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 10, 2026

RE: **HB 1415 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Identification**

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **OPPOSE HB 1415**. This bill requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a model policy requiring law enforcement officers to wear identification while performing their duties and requires all law enforcement agencies in the State to adopt policies consistent with that model. The bill also establishes significant criminal and civil penalties for violations.

Law enforcement agencies in Maryland already operate under established policies and regulations governing officer identification, uniforms, and professional appearance. Agencies currently require officers to wear identifying information such as name plates, badge numbers, or other identifying markers as part of their uniforms and operational standards. Mandating new statewide requirements could force agencies to redesign or replace existing uniforms, equipment, and identification systems that already meet departmental and regulatory standards. The cost associated with replacing uniforms, modifying equipment, and implementing new policies could be significant for local jurisdictions, particularly smaller agencies operating under tight budgets.

In addition to the fiscal concerns, House Bill 1415 creates substantial legal exposure for officers and agencies by attaching severe criminal and civil penalties to potential violations. The bill raises questions about how an officer's compliance would be evaluated and how a determination would be made regarding whether a violation occurred knowingly or unknowingly. Law enforcement officers are already subject to extensive internal review processes, departmental discipline, and administrative investigations for alleged policy violations. Layering additional criminal and civil liability on top of existing accountability systems could expose officers and

agencies to duplicative penalties for conduct that may already be addressed through established internal procedures.

The bill also raises concerns for out-of-state law enforcement officers who may enter Maryland while assisting with mutual aid, joint task forces, or other cooperative law enforcement operations. These officers may not be familiar with Maryland-specific requirements regarding identification standards and could unintentionally violate the law, potentially exposing them to litigation or criminal penalties despite acting in good faith while assisting Maryland agencies.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA believe that existing policies and internal accountability systems already provide appropriate oversight regarding officer identification and professional standards. House Bill 1415 could impose significant costs, will create legal uncertainty, and will expose officers to overlapping criminal, civil, and administrative penalties without clear operational benefit.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **OPPOSE** HB 1415 and respectfully request an **UNFAVORABLE** report.