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## POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

**BILL:** HB 1392 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Quotas (Community–Oriented Policing)

**FROM:** Maryland Office of the Public Defender

**POSITION:** FAVORABLE

**DATE:** March 6, 2026

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The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that this Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 1392, which addresses the detrimental effects of police quotas in Maryland. Police quotas, whether explicit or implied, introduce detrimental incentives that strain the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve. These quotas often misdirect public safety efforts, leading to unnecessary and harmful interactions between officers and community members.

In his New York University law review article, "Police Quotas," Professor Shawn Ossei-Owusu notes that there is a rare, broad consensus across the political spectrum regarding the need to change quota-based policing. See Shawn Ossei-Owusu, Police Quotas, 96 N.Y.U. L. Rev. 529 (2021). Groups including liberals, libertarians, conservatives, police unions, officers, and community members agree that quotas are unjust, counterproductive, and place an undue burden on law enforcement.

Professor Ossei-Owusu highlights the negative impact of quotas on three core groups:

1. **Marginalized Communities:** These groups are frequently targeted as officers attempt to meet their quotas, resulting in disproportionate harm from arbitrary policing tactics
2. **Police Officers:** Quotas restrict officer autonomy, forcing compliance and limiting discretion and authority to make independent, reasonable decisions while on duty.
3. **The Public:** Quotas skew the allocation of law enforcement resources by prioritizing numerical targets over genuine public safety needs, leading to overall inefficiency and potentially damaging policing practices.

This change is critical and long overdue because, even with the current, limited prohibitions, officers across the state continue to be subjected to both formal and informal quota requirements. These requirements pressure law enforcement personnel to meet arbitrary metrics for citations, arrests, or searches, rather than focusing their efforts on genuine public safety needs and community-oriented policing principles.

The practice of quota policing is deeply damaging on multiple levels. It actively erodes the public's trust in law enforcement, as communities perceive that interactions with police are motivated by revenue generation or statistical targets rather than fairness and necessity. Furthermore, these quotas disproportionately harm marginalized communities, leading to over-policing, strained community-police relations, and a perception of bias and unfair enforcement.

Moreover, these policies negatively impact the integrity and professionalism of police officers themselves. They incentivize officers to engage in conduct that may not align with constitutional principles or best practices, diverting their focus from investigating serious crimes and building positive community relationships.

As an organization committed to constitutional rights and equitable justice, we firmly believe that eliminating these harmful practices is a prerequisite for meaningful police reform. Therefore, we urge this legislative body to take a decisive and impactful step toward changing the culture of policing in our state by issuing a favorable report for this vital piece of legislation, House Bill 1392. Passing this bill will signal a clear commitment to fairness, equity, and trust in law enforcement across Maryland.

**For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Public Defender urges a favorable report on HB1392.**

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