



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Unit
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POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: March 5, 2026

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 1152 **POSITION:** Support

BILL TITLE: Department of State Police – Special Police Officers - Study

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

This legislation seeks to require the Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP) to conduct a comprehensive study and provide recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the employment and use of Special Police Officers. The MDSP is required to report their findings to the General Assembly and the Governor by December 1, 2026.

The statutory framework for appointing and approving Special Police Officers (SPOs) has been in place for many years. Recent statutory changes have modified certain SPO program parameters. With these changes being implemented, a comprehensive review is appropriate. This ensures the program operates as intended and serves public safety in the most defined and effective manner.

SPOs are uniquely authorized to serve designated properties, leveraging their in-depth, site-specific knowledge to deliver tailored security. Their consistent on-site presence enables rapid response and a visible public safety role that distinguishes them from other security options. By supporting property owners, institutions, and components of the judicial system, SPOs not only deter criminal activity but also directly enhance the sense of safety and well-being for many property stakeholders.

Members of law enforcement, State's Attorneys, and other stakeholders have raised questions and concerns about the scope and extent of SPOs' authority. House Bill 1152 provides a thoughtful, measured approach to examining these concerns while also evaluating the positive role SPOs play within their assigned jurisdictions.

Under House Bill 1152, the Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP) will consult with SPOs, their employers, police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and other impacted officials. This collaboration aims to identify challenges, highlight best practices, and develop balanced recommendations that enhance impact in the jurisdiction.

The MDSP looks forward to working with all stakeholders to produce a thorough report for the General Assembly.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of State Police urges the Committee to give House Bill 1152 a favorable report.