

Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is **Evan Avnet**, and I am the **President of the Maryland Investigators and Security Association (MISA)**. I respectfully request a **favorable report on HB 1152**, the bill requiring the Department of State Police to conduct a **study on the employment and use of Special Police Officers**, with findings and recommendations due by **December 1, 2026**. ([Maryland General Assembly](#))

MISA supports HB 1152 because Maryland has real, on-the-ground operational gaps in how Special Police Officers—particularly those assigned through security agencies—are expected to function when enforcement action is necessary. A formal, statewide study led by DSP is the right vehicle to put facts on the record and deliver workable, statewide solutions instead of piecemeal practices. Unfortunately, when we requested bill SB0455 to be introduced it was initially vetoed by the governor. Had it proceeded along its original timeline, we would have had approximately six months to introduce infrastructure. However, when the veto was overturned, it only allows 30 days which is was not enough time. I want to point out why this is so urgent. Special Police Officers have the same authority as a public police officer on private property, the ability to take someone's freedom away, and they are only required to have 80 hours of training.

In the best-practices guidance MISA created, we identified critical **infrastructure gaps** that create risk for the public, the courts, and officers: specifically **ORI/MDEC configuration barriers**, uncertainty around **criminal citation processing**, practical limitations on **booking**, and the absence of a standardized **custody-transfer pathway** when local law enforcement will not accept custody. Those gaps can quickly become constitutional and civil-liability exposure if detention continues without a lawful processing path.

Relatedly, once custody is created, you cannot simply “undo” the event—prolonged detention while searching for a pathway can be viewed as an unreasonable seizure, and questioning during custody can create self-incrimination disputes. MISA also highlights evidence and property handling concerns—drugs, weapons, and suspect property raise chain-of-custody, safety, and tampering-allegation risks—another area where statewide procedures and statutory clarity are needed and mandated MOUs are required with public policing agencies.

That is why MISA is attempting to introduce complementary legislation to address these same problems urgently—so Maryland has a reliable, standardized operational framework for SPO enforcement actions, custody transfer, charging pathways, and evidence handling. Our bill would increase training requirements and establish regulations. It is an emergency stop gap measure to ensure that SPOs do not abuse peoples rights, perform illegal actions, or worse.

HB 1152 and our proposed bill are necessary steps to build the official study record and align the system around practical, lawful procedures. We would appreciate support in our proposed bill as well.

For these reasons, MISA respectfully asks for a **favorable report on HB 1152 and support on introducing our proposed legislation**. Thank you.