



# Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

## Maryland Sheriffs' Association



### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** The Honorable Clarence K. Lam, Senate Delegation Chair, The Honorable Courtney Watson, House Delegation Chair, and Members of the Howard County Delegation

**FROM:** Chief of Staff David Morris, Co-Chair, MCPA, Joint Legislative Committee  
Sheriff Darren Popkin, Co-Chair, MSA, Joint Legislative Committee  
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

**DATE:** February 2, 2022

**RE:** **Howard County Board of Education – School Safety Personnel Ho. Co. 1-22**

**POSITION:** **Letter of Concern**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) wish to express their concerns with Howard County Board of Education – School Safety Personnel Ho. Co. 1-22. This bill would remove school resource officers from public schools in Howard County and instead require the Howard County Board of Education to develop, approve, and implement a plan to provide for adequate law enforcement coverage. The plan would also address potential needs for school security employees, additional mental health staff, and require training.

A school resource officer is a law enforcement officer who works closely with administrators in a school setting to create a safer environment for students and staff. In this role, the SRO also provides mentoring and conducts presentations on youth related issues. Because of this broader role in a school system, an SRO participates in a specialized training program designed specifically for working with students in a school setting. This training curriculum includes Maryland school law, trauma-informed counseling, restorative practices, relationship building, and peer mediation techniques. To employ the skills taught through this training an SRO must work in the school system, engage with students, build positive relationships, and direct students to resources. For many students, an SRO is a positive role model in which they trust and confide. These strong relationships build community trust and understanding and improve safety in the school environment.

Several recent incidents in Maryland's schools indicate the need for SROs. If an SRO was present in a recent school shooting in Montgomery County, a critically injured student may have received medical assistance sooner. In a recent Baltimore County incident, the SRO was present to break up a fight, but got injured himself. There are numerous examples across the country where an SRO has saved lives.

Maryland law enforcement has many outstanding SROs among its ranks, including one who was recently named National School Resource Officer of the Year. MCPA and MSA urges the Committee not to take steps that would harm the great work of these officers.

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