



# Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

## Maryland Sheriffs' Association



### MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary and Ben Barnes, Chairs and Members of the Ways and Means Committee and the Appropriations Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee  
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee  
Natasha Mehu, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 21, 2024

RE: **HB 1167 Maryland Center for School Safety - Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program - Established**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT HB 1167**. This bill creates a statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program overseen by the Maryland Center for School Safety.

Under HB 1167, the Program is charged with implementing a statewide emergency notification system that facilitates communication between public elementary and secondary school personnel, a public safety answering point, and a public safety agency in life-threatening and emergency situations, including medical emergencies and the presence of an active shooter or intruder at a public school. The Program must also procure and implement an emergency communication platform for these purposes.

Time is of the essence when schools are faced with an emergency. The program created under this bill would ensure that all key stakeholders are quickly and automatically notified when an emergency arises. The standards the bill establishes for communication platforms require certification by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Federal Support Anti-Terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies Act. The platform must also be capable of administering a cellular panic button system for internal communication and an automated emergency alert notification system for external stakeholders such as nearby public and nonpublic schools.

The safety of the students, faculty, and first responders at our schools during an emergency situation relies on quick and clear communication among all stakeholders. The program created under this bill standardizes and facilitates that communication. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT HB 1167** and urge a **FAVORABLE** committee report.