



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair and
Members of the House Judiciary 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: January 23, 2024

RE: **HB 8 – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Police Officer
Certification - Eligibility**

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT HB 8 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill modifies the eligibility requirements for an individual to be certified as a police officer.

Under current law, an individual who is a permanent legal resident of the U.S. and an honorably discharged veteran of the U.S. armed forces could be certified as a police officer if the individual has applied to obtain United States citizenship and the application is still pending approval. HB 8 expands the eligible category of individuals to include the army national guard, the air national guard, or a reserve component of the United States armed forces, but also removes the requirement that the individual has applied for citizenship and the application is still pending. The removal of this phrase is concerning.

An officer, who is not a U.S. citizen, is limited to serving only in certain capacities, such as patrol or community resources officer to name a couple. This individual would not be able to serve in capacities requiring a security clearance, involvement in FBI joint task forces, or being deputized as a U.S. Marshal. The requirement to obtain citizenship and have an application pending approval was included in past legislation to address MCPA and MSA's concern that without it, it could create two different classes of officers and standards to ensure workforce and personnel issues do not result.

Maryland law enforcement agencies across the state are having difficulty recruiting officers and MCPA and MSA understands the intent of HB 8 is to assist with recruitment efforts and create greater diversity at the State and local level. While MCPA and MSA applaud the sponsor's efforts to tackle this issue, the removal of the phrase "provided that the individual has applied to obtain United State citizenship and the application is still pending approval" is problematic for an agency's longer-term operations.

MCPA and MSA respectfully requests that HB 8 be amended to remove the brackets on page two of the bill in lines 14 and 15 to still require the individual to apply for citizenship with the application still pending. This would ensure a path to place officers on equal footing.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT HB 8 WITH AMENDMENTS** and urge a **FAVORABLE** committee report as amended.

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