



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William Smith Jr., Chair and
Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings 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: **SB 607 – Police Accountability and Discipline – Summary Punishment**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT** SB 607 – Police Accountability and Discipline, Summary Punishment.

Under the Police Accountability Act, every complaint of police misconduct involving a member of the public must be investigated by a law enforcement agency and then forwarded to a county Administrative Charging Committee (“ACC”) for review. If an officer declines to accept discipline recommended by the ACC, a hearing board must be convened.

Under the Police Accountability Act, a law enforcement agency may make its own determinations regarding discipline for complaints of misconduct that do not involve a member of the public, subject to the Statewide Disciplinary Matrix. If an officer does not agree with the discipline, a hearing board must be convened.

Whether following an ACC review or an agency determination, the process to discipline an officer from complaint to hearing board can take weeks or months and involves an expenditure of agency and county resources. Many of the complaints forwarded to ACC’s are minor offenses, and the most severe punishment that can be imposed under the Statewide Matrix is a letter of reprimand.

ACC, agency, and county resources are better spent addressing serious allegations of misconduct. Minor violations of policy can, and should be, handled expeditiously and efficiently by the agency. A written reprimand issued months after the event does nothing to address the conduct. Citizens should not have to wait months for a resolution of their minor complaints. By allowing summary punishment of minor violations, SB 607 is a significant step toward improving the Police Accountability Act and allowing ACC’s to focus on serious misconduct matters.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA urge a **FAVORABLE** report on **SB 607**.