



House Bill 1503

*Public Safety - State Funding - Requirement for Use of Force
De-Escalation Training of Law Enforcement Officers*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: March 2, 2017

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 1503 as it imposes unreasonable penalties on local law enforcement agencies even if they are making good faith efforts to comply with desired “de-escalation” trainings.

HB 1503 would withhold all state and grant funding from a local law enforcement agency if all individuals required to take specified trainings do not complete the trainings. Funding that would be withheld includes state aid for police protection as well as grants that fund program targeting internet crimes against children, protective body armor, school safety enforcement, law enforcement equipment, DNA technology, and community programs.

Counties respect the intent to enforce training compliance and believe that their officers should complete all required trainings. However, they are concerned that the bill may have the unintended consequence of stripping a law enforcement agency of nearly all its funding if even just one officer is unable to complete the training. The bill does not provide for any exceptions. There could be cases in which a particular officer may be pregnant, on military deployment, or otherwise practically unable to complete a training. The severe loss of department-wide funding could cripple law enforcement operations and threaten public safety. We do not believe that is the intent of the bill, but this could be the practical implication.

MACo understands the need to enforce compliance with required law enforcement trainings, but does not believe the penalty should be at the expense of public safety. For these reasons, MACo urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 1503.