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BILL: House Bill 198
TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education – Security –School Resource Officers
DATE: February 11, 2016
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM) **OPPOSES HOUSE BILL 198 - Primary and Secondary Education – Security –School Resource Officers**. This bill requires that at least one school resource officer be assigned to each public school in the State; requiring specified public schools to hire retired law enforcement officers as school resource officers for the school; requiring specified school resource officers to obtain a special police officer commission issued by the Department of State Police; requiring the county superintendent to submit an application to the Secretary of State Police for a special police commission for each school resource officer hired.

The Public School Superintendents in Maryland are committed to maintaining a safe and healthy school environment for all students. Currently, every school in Maryland has developed a school safety plan as well as a system wide action plan in the event of any emergency. Embedded in that plan is the use of school resource officers and other support personnel. The diversity of our great state necessitates the development of locally developed initiatives and plans. A one size fits all approach does not work for all 24 local school systems in Maryland. House Bill 198, as written, would have a tremendous fiscal impact on an already strained budget and would redirect funding from the ETF which is currently used to fund the Bridge to Excellence Foundation formula and programs.

PSSAM respectfully urges an UNFAVORABLE report on House Bill 198, supporting instead the independent governance of school boards on all education policy decisions regarding hiring of school personnel and implementing district wide initiatives and activities.