

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



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TO: Chair Bobby Zirkin and Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Phil Caroom, MAJR Executive Committee
DATE: February 15, 2017

Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) supports the Citation Bill -- SB 477/HB 408 as a valuable tool for law enforcement

- to save officers' time,
- to reduce unnecessary arrest and detention, and
- to improve community relations.

At the same time, the Citations Bill preserves officers' discretion to arrest when necessary to ensure public safety, to confirm a suspect's identification, and to process other open warrants and more serious charges. This bill further expands officers' citations options as begun by SB 422 (2012) that permitted use for misdemeanors with maximum penalties of 90 days or less, and for marijuana possession.

The Governor's Office for Crime Control and Prevention ([GOCCP](#)) has tracked [citations use since 2012](#) finding a surge in Maryland's three largest counties in the first years. But, after notoriety of the law faded and marijuana decriminalization passed, police use of citations dropped in all but one county: In Anne Arundel County, the effective use of citations has increased each year to the point that, in 2015, one of every three District Court criminal charges was filed by citation. See [GOCCP 2016 report](#) and Dist.Ct. statistics. (*Also, see chart on statewide usage on next page of this testimony.*)

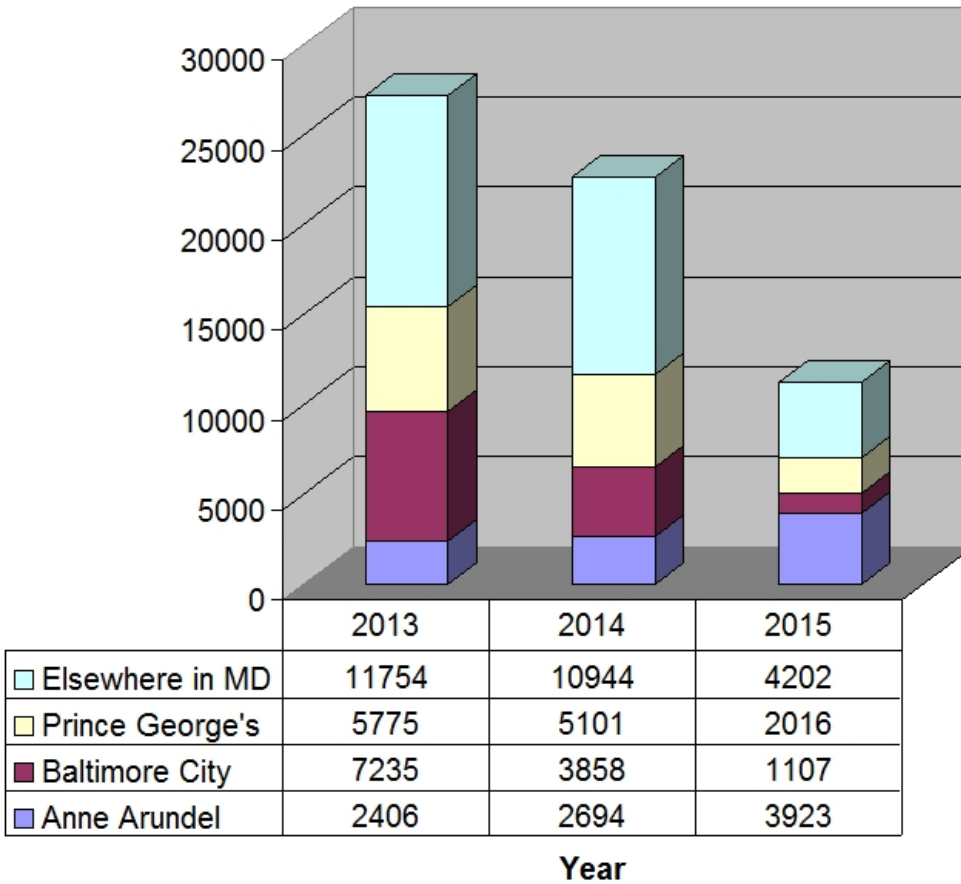
MAJR has investigated these citations trends, inquiring with administrators who supervise police training academies in Anne Arundel and elsewhere in Maryland. In Anne Arundel's Police Training Academy, it is reported, exercises and role-play to demonstrate appropriate use of citations are included repeatedly in different parts of the curriculum. However, the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission (PCTC) that coordinates other police academies around the state cannot report that citations are similarly included in other jurisdictions' training.

For all these reasons, MAJR urges adoption of HB 408 to expand the permitted number of misdemeanors for which citations may be used, when police officers find it safe and appropriate to do so.

Criminal Citations Issued

GOCCP Report to the State of Maryland

<https://goccp.maryland.gov/reports-publications/law-enforcement-reports/criminal-citations/>



For more GOCCP data on citation use in the past three years, see

<http://goccp.maryland.gov/reports-publications/law-enforcement-reports/criminal-citations/>

and

<file:///C:/Users/PBED8~1.CAR/AppData/Local/Temp/criminal-citations-report-2016-1.pdf>