



Jeffrey R. Gahler
Sheriff

Harford County Sheriff's Office

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NEWS RELEASE

Sheriff Gahler Announces 2016 Legislative Agenda

For Immediate Release

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[December 31, 2015, Bel Air, MD] Harford County Sheriff Jeffrey R. Gahler is proud to announce his legislative agenda for the 2016 Maryland General Assembly. With help from several members of the General Assembly, a total of 13 bills, suggested by Sheriff Gahler, will be introduced during the 2016 legislative session. The bills range in topic; focusing mainly on traffic safety, gun ownership and fighting the scourge of heroin in our communities.

As previously announced, through the work of Sheriff Gahler's Heroin Overdose Prevention Effort (HOPE) workgroup, Delegates Kathy Szeliga and Andrew Cassilly are introducing bills aimed at curbing heroin abuse in our communities. These measures will increase penalties for those attempting to sell heroin near methadone clinics and other treatment facilities; give law enforcement in Harford County access to real time data concerning heroin overdoses; and require medical personnel be contacted whenever NARCAN is used to prevent a suspected overdose. As of December 29th, law enforcement has responded to 198 suspected heroin overdoses in Harford County. Of those 198 overdoses, 27 have turned fatal. "Heroin is a serious threat to the well-being of our community," says Sheriff Gahler, "and these tools will help law enforcement across the state combat this growing problem and bring those responsible for its spread to justice."

Sheriff Gahler will also work closely with Delegates Seth Howard and Michael Malone, as well as Senators Wayne Norman and Robert Cassilly to protect the right of all Marylanders' to bear arms. One of these bills seeks to cut the license fee in half for residents attempting to purchase a handgun. Another strives to provide training exemptions for recognized correctional officers and retired federal law enforcement officers attempting to obtain a Handgun Qualification License (HQL). Sheriff Gahler also hopes to authorize the Secretary of State Police to temporarily waive the requirement for a specified firearms training course for those deemed to be in imminent danger.

Recent incidents across the country have demonstrated a lack of public awareness and education surrounding expectations and legal requirements during a traffic stop. At the end of the day, officers everywhere want to ensure the safety of those they are charged to protect. To that end, effective education concerning interactions with law enforcement during a traffic stop is critical. Partnering with Delegates Andrew Cassilly and Mary Ann Lisanti, Sheriff Gahler hopes to require that every driver's education school in Maryland provide education on the basics of positive and productive interactions with law enforcement during a traffic stop.

During the 2015 legislative session, seven counties throughout Maryland worked with Delegates and Senators to introduce legislation providing their law enforcement agencies the ability to participate in the Warrant Intercept Program. This Program authorizes the Maryland Comptroller's Office to withhold someone's Maryland income tax refund if there is an active warrant issued by the courts for their arrest. Delegate Theresa Reilly will introduce a bill that opens this program to jurisdictions throughout the State of Maryland.

"These legislative measures are important for the safety and rights of citizens throughout Harford County and the State of Maryland," says Gahler. "The invaluable support I've received from these members of the General Assembly is a testament to their dedication to the people of Maryland. I will join them in Annapolis to do all I can to help these measures pass, and become law."

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Harford County Sheriff's Office Mission

With courage, honor and integrity we protect the rights and dignity of all citizens. In partnership with our communities, we strive to preserve the peace and provide for a safe environment for all.