

STATE POLICE

February 27, 1952

Honorable John C. Luber
Speaker of the House of Delegates
State House
Annapolis, Maryland

Dear Mr. Speaker:

House Bill 24¹ provides for transfer of the expense of the State Police as a charge upon special funds accruing from motor vehicle revenues to a charge upon the general fund revenues of the state. The proposed legislation is both unrealistic and unwise. It ignores completely the financial and historical background of the State Police Department and of legislation as to distribution of motor vehicle revenues. Until 1935, the State Police were actually a part of the Department of Motor Vehicles, and their progress to status as a separate department merely recognized the increasing burden of highway and traffic patrol, and the necessity for co-ordinated enforcement of the motor vehicle code and safety on the highways. With slight variance the work of the Department has continuously been primarily that of highway patrol. Most recent figures for the past several years indicate that approximately 94% of the arrests made by state police are for highway violations, and that of the remaining 6% of arrests, about three fourths of them are for violations committed in the presence of state police patrolling the highways. Thus more than 98% of the performance of the state police is directly connected with highway patrol. Traditionally and properly, the policing of the local subdivisions remains a matter for local control, with use of state police only in extreme or unusual emergencies, which all of us know to be rare.

The history of financial legislation inseparably connected with the problem should be well known to most legislators. Until 1947, the work of the state police in patrolling the highways was always accepted as a charge on motor vehicle revenues.

The Maryland Commission on Distribution of Tax Revenues, in presenting its report, familiarly known as the "Sherbow Report" to the 1947 Legislature, recommended continuance of the State Police as a charge on motor vehicle revenues. This was part of a comprehensive review of state revenues and expenditures, with suggested revisions of state revenues. The report considered the distribution of highway user taxes and motor vehicle revenues existing in 1947. A conglomeration of methods existed for distribution of

¹ This veto was sustained by the Senate on March 4, 1951.