

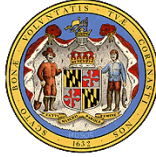
CHARLTON T. HOWARD III  
State Prosecutor

SARAH R. DAVID  
Deputy State Prosecutor

LETAM DUSON  
Senior Assistant State Prosecutor

ABIGAIL E. TICSE  
Senior Assistant State Prosecutor

STATE OF MARYLAND



OFFICE OF  
THE STATE PROSECUTOR

Hampton Plaza  
Suite 410  
300 East Joppa Road  
Towson, MD 21286-3152  
Telephone (410) 321-4067  
1 (800) 695-4058  
Fax (410) 321-3851

Office of the State Prosecutor

Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget  
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
Public Safety, Transportation & Environment Subcommittee  
Senator Sarah K. Elfreth  
February 17, 2023

House Appropriations Committee  
Public Safety & Administration Subcommittee  
Delegate Antonio (Tony) Bridges  
February 22, 2023

The Office of the State Prosecutor (OSP) continues to investigate and where appropriate prosecute political corruption, official misconduct, election law and campaign finance offenses, and other crimes throughout the State of Maryland. The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) Analysis accurately depicts the significant growth in corruption and misconduct complaints during the previous four years, as well as almost a 100% increase in investigations initiated, which provides ample justification for the relatively modest budget increases requested. The Office concurs in the DLS Recommendation and the Governor's Budget Allowance.

OSP Response to DLS Key Observations:

DLS Key Observation 1. "Corruption Complaints Increase after Implementation of New Reporting System."

OSP concurs with DLS's analysis noting a significant increase in corruption complaints. As noted, OSP has experienced a record growth over the past four years in general criminal complaints, as well as responding investigations. OSP instituted a number of operational enhancements and communication initiatives during the same period which have significantly improved the outreach and professional response by the agency to submitted complaints, including the adoption for the first time of an electronic case management system, the establishment of an industry-standard investigative reporting and documentation policy, and the incorporation of standardized complaint and investigation assessment, review, and quality assurance protocols. In addition, OSP established a user-friendly complaint portal on the agency website, and developed social media accounts and counterpart agency engagement efforts

resulting in much greater public and counterpart agency awareness of the OSP mission and agency investigative and prosecutive accomplishments. In sum, these initiatives resulted in a substantial increase in complaints, and much more accurate tracking, documentation and reporting of cases as they progressed through the criminal justice system.

OSP has also engaged in several high-profile prosecutions and trials, which has increased referrals from members of the public. Also, recent attention on police misconduct nationally and throughout Maryland has increased our complaints regarding police officers. We have worked to address this through specialized police prosecution and investigations with consistent leadership in a specially assigned Senior Assistant State Prosecutor. The Office has also worked closely with our partners to ensure that we are able to best leverage our limited resources by partnering with local, federal and state prosecutors and law enforcement to investigate, and where appropriate, prosecute public corruption and police misconduct.

Improved triage and assessment of complaints also resulted in enhanced quantity and quality of consequent investigations. While some of the above improvements were achieved with minimal resource investments, most technical additions, such as the electronic case management system, required substantial expenditures above previous baselines.

DLS Key Observation 2. “Election Law Referrals Decrease, Enforcement Actions Increase”

OSP concurs with DLS’s analysis noting a decrease during the past year in Election Law Referrals, but notes (as does DLS) that the rate of election law and campaign finance referrals, the majority of which originate with the State Board of Elections (SBE), tracks the federal and state election cycles. Delays are often caused by the challenges of collecting information from local boards of election and garnering essential financial data from a plethora of institutions. Given the past trends following hotly contested elections, and the technical and process improvements noted in the section above, OSP expects ever-increasing numbers of both referrals and enforcement actions in the upcoming fiscal years.

OSP works closely with SBE to coordinate the processing and assessment of complaints to ensure OSP’s limited investigative and prosecutive resources are employed in the optimum manner to enforce the laws safeguarding the integrity of state and local elections. OSP enforcement actions include both civil and criminal remedies, and in the first instance are most often geared to bring errant parties into compliance with the regulatory requirements, while at the same time identifying individual instances of criminal culpability meriting further investigation and litigation. Despite the cyclical reduction in referrals, OSP’s focused engagement and coordination with SBE, and the afore-mentioned agency technical and process improvements, have resulted in a greater quantity and quality of OSP enforcement actions over the past two years, a trend which is expected to continue.

Charlton T. Howard III  
State Prosecutor