

## Over 20 Baltimore City Police Officers File Charges of Discrimination Alleging Failure to Accommodate Their Disabilities

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Baltimore, MD (PRWEB) March 18, 2005 -- A Baltimore area employment law firm, Snider & Fischer LLC (<a href="https://www.sniderlaw.com">www.sniderlaw.com</a>), has recently been retained to represent a class of Baltimore City Police Department officers who will shortly be forced into resignation or retirement due to the Department's decision to end its light duty program for injured police officers.

Michael J. Snider and Morris E. Fischer, partners in the firm, stated that unless the Department can demonstrate an underlying undue burden that would result from retaining these roughly 150 police officers in their current light duty positions, or that the disabled officers cannot perform the "essential functions" of their current police light duty positions, this move violates the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination within any program receiving federal funds, such as the BCPD. The proposed termination action for most officers who do not retire involuntarily is expected to take place on or about April 1, 2005.

Many of the disabled officers are decorated officers, injured in the line of duty and have devoted years of their lives to public service and personal sacrifice. Their disabilities include an officer with a torn rotator cup, two knees post-surgery, hypertension, extremely high blood pressure and coronary disease and another officer has a tore a tendon in his left foot, six pinched nerves and a fused neck.

One of the Firm's clients, Officer Bruce McKitrick, suffers from a missing colon (large intestines), and cannot ride in a police car due to his need to take frequent bathroom breaks. He stated facetiously that: "I cannot think of a more degrading way to publicly thank myself and these other officers for their years of service by effectively terminating our positions. Even worse, is the BCPD's offer of the same eliminated positions back to the officers on a contractual basis with no benefits and at half the pay."

These officers' contentions that they served in the light duty department for a good number of years, performing critical duties such as internal investigations and staffing the highly acclaimed "311" non-emergency response program. The BCPD made a decision years ago to create a permanent light duty program, and to retain disabled police officers as part of an active and necessary component of the department. By taking away that accommodation for these disabled officers, says Snider & Fischer, the Department effectively slams the door on persons with disabilities by treating them in a discriminatory and disgraceful manner.

Yesterday, the law firm filed Charges of Discrimination on behalf of roughly two dozen disabled officers with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and states that it will commence an action shortly on behalf of the class of BCPD officers in the United States District Court for the District of Maryland.

This is an important battle not only for these officers, but for the City of Baltimore itself because it ultimately represents the manner in which this city views its disabled employees and values their contributions.



Issued by: Snider & Fischer, LLC

Contact:
Michael J. Snider, Esq.
Snider & Fischer, LLC
104 Church Lane, Suite 201
Baltimore, MD 21208
410-653-9060 phone (offc)
410-812-6399 cell phone
410-653-9061 fax
www.sniderlaw.com webpage
1-800-DISCRIMINATION (sm) toll-free

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Contact Information
Michael Snider
Snider & Fischer, LLC
<a href="http://www.sniderlaw.com">http://www.sniderlaw.com</a>
410-653-9060