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Testimony

SB 622 – Correctional Officers' Retirement System - Membership

Pensions/Budget & Taxation

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Support with Amendments

AFSCME Council 3 strongly supports SB 622. This legislation, with amendment, would add the Department of Juvenile Services' Case Management Specialists I, II, III and Supervisor to the Correctional Officers Retirement System (CORS). We seek a friendly amendment due to a mix up during the bill drafting process.

Chapter 580 of the Laws of 2018 added a number of DJS and Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DPSCS) job titles to the Correctional Officers' 20-year retirement system. Unfortunately, DJS Case Management Specialists were left out of this eligibility.

The 20-year retirement system exists to recognize that the stresses of this employment contribute to a shorter life span. While DJS Case Management Specialists may sound like a management job, they are actually the Parole and Probation (P&P) Agents for the juvenile clientele. While serving a different population, DJS Case Managers' daily activities, required skills, licensing and training are similar. P&P Agents are in the Correctional Retirement System (CORS), while DJS Case Management Specialists are not.

Case Management Specialists visit juvenile offenders in their homes and communities. This population may have issues with impulse control and high levels of gang activity. As a result, this younger population can make DJS Case Managers vulnerable to unpredictable dangers.

Their duties and responsibilities often require them to work evenings and weekends, traveling throughout the state to engage with clients, families, the courts, law enforcement and juvenile residential facilities. They need to both monitor and engage their young clients, create compliance plans and coordinate and execute those plans, often serving as a liaison to other stakeholders and community organizations.

Adding this job title to CORS should assist in recruitment and retention for a position that is often difficult to hire. We thank Senator Rosapepe for his efforts on this legislation, and ask for a favorable report.

Every AFSCME Maryland State and University contract guarantees a right to union representation. An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.
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