

AFSCME-FWA-SB622

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Patrick Moran - President

Testimony
SB 622 – Correctional Officers' Retirement System - Membership
Pensions/Budget & Taxation
March 5, 2020
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.

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An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.
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AshleyWatsonAFSCME3167_FWA_SB622

Uploaded by: Watson, ashley

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY – SB 622 – Correctional Officers' Retirement System - Membership

Pensions/Budget & Taxation

March 5, 2020

Support with Amendments

Hello Madam Chair and members of this committee. I appreciate you taking the time to hear me out today.

My name is Ashley Watson, and I am a Case Management Specialist for the Department of Juvenile Services. I am also a proud member of AFSCME Local 3167. I have worked for the Department of Juvenile Services for approximately 12 years.

Although being a Case Manager for at-risk youth is a rewarding career, it can also be very dangerous. As a Case Manager we not only have to rehabilitate the at-risk youth, but often the family as a whole. Case Management Specialists are responsible for these youth on a daily basis: in DJS facilities, courthouses, schools and now more and more in neighborhoods which have become extremely dangerous. A Case Management Specialist is basically a juvenile probation officer: we oversee the conditions of probation for our youth, as well as re-integrating families and communities back together.

When meeting the needs of our youth we can encounter serious obstacles. Most of our youth have serious mental health issues stemming from multiple traumas that have occurred in their lives, making it hard to address their needs. This requires that Case

Managers work really diligently with long, endless hours on caseloads to ensure the youth are getting the proper education, therapy, and many other things that are intertwined to ensure their complete rehabilitation.

While Parole & Probation officers and DJS Case Managers require the same education and training, I believe DJS Case Managers carry greater responsibility for engaging at-risk youth than what a probation officer faces with an adult. We often are responsible for guiding and advising them on daily life choices – it is more than just explaining their conditions of probation and sending them back into the community.

DJS Case Managers often have heavy caseloads due to short staffing that is brought on by losing great and dedicated employees to other agencies that offer 20 year retirement with a smaller caseload and less responsibility. If anyone on this committee knows about working with a young population, the first step toward success is getting them to trust you. With the state in a staffing crisis, we are losing case managers at a higher rate than before, making it hard for these youth to successfully complete their probation because they have to learn to re-trust their future with different Case Managers on a regular basis.

I ask this committee to support this bill because it will help retain staff. It will also help Maryland's youth – they deserve to work with the most dedicated case management specialists that Maryland has to offer. This bill makes it one less obstacle our youth have to deal with while being rehabilitated in the juvenile justice system.

SB0622 - Support with Amendments - DJS

Uploaded by: Abed, Sam

Position: FWA

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor

Larry Hogan
Governor

Sam Abed
Secretary

DATE: 3/5/2020

BILL NUMBER: SB 622 – Correctional Officer Retirement System - Membership

DJS POSTITION: Support with Amendments

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS or department) supports SB 622 with amendments.

This bill as amended adds DJS Case Management Specialists (CMS) and Case Management Specialist Supervisors (CMSS) to the Correctional Officers Retirement System, also known as CORS.

SB 622 enhances public safety and promotes better outcomes for youth and families by:

- Serving as a proven and effective retention tool – DJS Resident Advisor turnover peaked at over 70% annually; since these staff members have joined CORS turnover has been on a steady decline, currently standing at to 12.2%; and
- Making sure DJS can successfully supervise and treat a vulnerable and high-needs population by retaining our most experienced staff.

SB 622 promotes fairness by offering state employees doing similar work, similar benefits. Like adult probation and parole agents, DJS case managers:

- Are trained in the same academy as the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) probation agents;
- Meet with youth in their homes, facilities, and communities;
- Make sure restitution is paid and community service hours are completed; and
- Monitor youth and help promote safer communities.

Unlike adult probation staff:

- DJS case managers are not part of CORS and do not receive a 20-year retirement; and
- The disparity between DJS and DPSCS results in our most seasoned staff moving to adult parole and probation, taking with them specialized knowledge, training and experience working with children while the retirement cost to the State is the same.

For these reasons DJS urges a favorable report on SB 622 with amendments.

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LARRY HOGAN
Governor

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lieutenant Governor

DAVID R. BRINKLEY
Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

SENATE BILL 622 Correctional Officers' Retirement System – Membership (Rosapepe)

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: March 5, 2020

COMMITTEE: Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

SUMMARY OF BILL: SB 622 seeks to expand eligibility to the Correctional Officers' Retirement System (CORS) to include residential group life managers, youth center cooks or cook leads, food service workers or supervisors, and maintenance assistants, chiefs, mechanics, mechanic seniors, or supervisors of the Department of Juvenile Services on or after July 1, 2020. These employees are currently covered under the Employee Pension System (EPS).

EXPLANATION: The State's Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) liability will increase due to the assumption that the impacted employees will retire earlier under CORS than under EPS. The most recent OPEB valuation (June 30, 2019) assumed enactment of Chapter 767 of 2019 (State Retirees Prescription Drug Assistance Programs) would take effect January 1, 2021, and the current Employer Group Waiver Plan (EGWP) would be terminated (Scenario A); however, in the event the State loses *Fitch v. State of Maryland*, the OPEB impact of HB 778 compared to EGWP continuing indefinitely has also been evaluated (Scenario B).

The net OPEB liability would increase by \$34,000 per active participant in the first year under Scenario A, and by \$39,500 per active participant in the first year under Scenario B. The fiscal 2021 allowance budgets 142 full-time equivalents for the positions identified in this bill, which would cause an OPEB liability increase of \$4.8 million under Scenario A or \$5.6 million under Scenario B.

As of June 30, 2019, the State's net OPEB liability was \$14.3 billion and reflects a 2.4% funded ratio. High unfunded liabilities can be a cause of concern for rating agencies and threaten the State's AAA bond rating.

**For additional information, contact Barbara Wilkins at
(410) 260-6371 or barbara.wilkins1@maryland.gov**

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