



**SB 898**  
**Maryland Criminal Justice Debt Elimination Act of 2021**

MCAA Position: **OPPOSE**

TO: Judicial Proceedings Committee

DATE: February 17, 2021

FROM: T.D. Reece, President

For decades, Maryland jails have worked tirelessly to create viable, sustainable and effective programs to influence positive change in the lives of those committed to their care. Programs such as religious services, educational, job-training, substance abuse counseling, work release, home detention, and pretrial supervision provide opportunities for incarcerated persons to successfully transition and reenter our communities and help to reduce recidivism. Jails were never required to create these programs, but out of responsibility and compassion did so. Correctional professionals, the dedicated people who know best, developed creative solutions along the way to properly fund and continually improve these programs.

Programs such as home detention, work release, and pretrial supervision have traditionally been partially funded by requiring incarcerated persons to pay certain fees. In doing so, consideration has always been given to cases of indigence or unaffordability. But the fact remains that these programs are sustained by collecting fees from those who can afford it.

This bill would essentially turn many of these programs on their heads by removing the authority of Counties, sheriffs, or managing jail officials from collecting certain associated fees. The consequence would be that many jails may no longer be able to facilitate these programs. The absence of these programs would only hurt incarcerated persons, limit their rehabilitative opportunities, and reduce their chance of success. For these reasons, the Maryland Correctional Administrator's Association opposes SB 898 and asks this committee to give it an unfavorable report.