



# NATIONAL CORRECTIONAL EMPLOYEES UNION

30 North King Street, Northampton, MA 01060

March 6, 2023,

Dear Chairman Ben Barnes, Vice Chairman Mark S. Chang, and Distinguished Members Gabriel Acevero, Carl Anderton Jr., Tony Bridges, Mark Edelson, Catherine M. Forbes, Jefferson L. Ghrist, Kevin M. Harris, Jim Hinebaugh Jr., Julian Ivey, Dana Jones, Marc Korman, Jazz Lewis, Nino Mangione, Aletheia McCaskill, Susan K. McComes, Ric Metzgar, Kirill Reznik, Emily Shetty, Stephanie Smith, Jared Solomon, Joshua Stonko Jr., and Courtney Watson of the Maryland House Appropriations Committee;

On behalf of the National Correctional Employees Union (NCEU), I write with respect to pending legislation (HB0637) which would permit collective bargaining for sheriff's detention center deputies working at the prison in Washington County, Maryland.

Please know the National Correctional Employees Union (NCEU) is the exclusive bargaining representative for correctional personnel in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, New York and Pennsylvania. Recently, the NCEU was contacted by the detention center deputy sheriff's from the Washington County Prison in Hagerstown, MD desiring to organize for collective bargaining. After talking with the group and holding meetings for the purposes of providing information, the NCEU filed a certification petition with the Washington County Board of Commissioners, in accordance with their rules. The NCEU obtained a "showing of interest" of approximately eighty percent (80%) of interested staff desiring to be unionized. The County Commissioners, by and through their County Attorney, sent a letter explaining that under Maryland Code, Courts and Judicial Proceedings, Subsection 2-335, "*The Maryland General Assembly has not granted authority to the Washington County Sheriff to engage in collective bargaining.*"

As of the date of this letter, the hard working men and women of Washington County Sheriff's Office and Prison desire the ability to unionize and collectively bargain with their employer. The submitted legislation before you, with the support of the newly elected Sheriff Brian Albert and current County Commissioners by way of a unanimous vote, would allow for the sheriff's department personnel to unionize and bargain collectively.

The NCEU is in full support of the proposed legislation and urges you to take the necessary steps to pass said legislation. The ability to collectively bargain for wages, benefits, and working conditions is critical for the men and women of the Washington County Sheriff's Office and Detention Center who work each day under difficult and highly stressful conditions to ensure that our communities are safe and the prison is secure.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter and please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any questions.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher Murphy".

Christopher Murphy, President

Office: 413-788-6238

Fax: 413-273-1023

[www.nceu.org](http://www.nceu.org)