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<b>Bill:</b>	Senate Bill 1077	<b>Date:</b>	February 28, 2024
<b>Title:</b>	Public Schools - Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures - School Security Employees	<b>Committee:</b>	Education, Energy & Environment
<b>Position:</b>	Letter of Support	<b>Contact:</b>	Kim Buckheit <a href="mailto:kim.buckheit1@maryland.gov">kim.buckheit1@maryland.gov</a> 443-902-0622

On behalf of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support for Senate Bill 1077. MCSS remains committed to assisting Local Education Agencies (LEA) in implementing a layered approach to school safety.

MCSS fully supports county governments and school systems in making decisions about local school safety personnel and other layered approaches to school safety and security. The School Resource Officer (SRO) Grant Program is a non-competitive grant program designed for LEAs and law enforcement agencies to meet statutory requirements to provide each public school in Maryland with an SRO or adequate law enforcement coverage. Senate Bill 1077 would increase flexibility for locals to use this grant to support local decisions to include School Security Employees (SSEs) as part of the multi-pronged approach to school safety and security.

SSEs are individuals who (1) are not SROs, (2) are employed by the LEA to provide safety and security-related services at a public school, and (3) are required to complete the MCSS SRO/SSE model training. MCSS supports the creation of diverse school safety and security teams that include **both** SROs and SSEs, as each provides opportunities for strong connections with students, caregivers, and school personnel. As an employee of the LEA, the SSE works closely with school-based leaders on safety and security measures, often outside law enforcement's scope. The SSE can be closely involved in student behavior support, providing interventions to prevent, mitigate, and restore harm, something that an SRO can't do given their law enforcement duties.

MCSS's support for Senate Bill 1077 and the use of SSEs by local jurisdictions is not counter to support for SROs, as again, each position working together creates a layered approach to school safety.

Thank you again for taking the time to review this information and consider giving Senate Bill 1077 a favorable vote.