



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Natasha Mehu, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 6, 2024

RE: **SB 273 - State and Local Correctional Facilities - Operation of Unmanned Aircraft -
Image Recording and Delivery of Contraband**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT SB 273**. This bill restricts the use of unmanned aircraft around correctional facilities.

SB 273 would prohibit someone from intentionally using an unmanned aircraft (e.g. drone) to photograph a correctional facility without prior authorization from the Secretary or correctional administrator and would prohibit someone from transferring contraband via unmanned aircraft. In both situations, the individual would be charged with a misdemeanor.

It's essential to protect correctional facilities from security breaches. There have been local and national incidents of unmanned aircraft being used to gather intel on correctional grounds and operations and to deliver contraband to prisoners on site. The intentional use of drones for these purposes puts the safety of everyone onsite – employees, prisoners, visitors – at risk.

To ensure hobbyist inadvertently using their drones aren't charged, the bill specifies that the photographing of the facility must be intentional. To ensure all are on notice about the law, the bill requires correctional facilities to post signs regarding unmanned aircraft prohibitions in areas that are visible to the general public.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT SB 273** and urge a **FAVORABLE** report.