

**SB273\_DPSCS\_SUPPORT.pdf**

Uploaded by: Catherine Kahl

Position: FAV



**Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services  
Office of the Secretary**

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**BILL: SENATE BILL 273**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

**EXPLANATION:** This bill will prohibit a person from operating or causing the operation of an unmanned aerial vehicle over a State or local correctional facility for the purpose of delivering contraband and further provides that an individual may not photograph or record images of a correctional facility without the permission of the Secretary or managing official of the facility.

**COMMENTS:**

- The Department operates the Division of Correction (DOC) and the Division of Pretrial Detention and Services (DPDS).
  - DOC operates 13 State correctional facilities housing offenders sentenced to periods of incarceration for 18 months and longer.
  - DPDS operates the Baltimore City Pretrial Complex which houses pretrial detainees and incarcerated individuals sentenced to incarceration for periods of 18 months and less.
- Unmanned aerial vehicles, commonly referred to as drones, are increasingly being used to conduct unauthorized surveillance and are used to introduce contraband into correctional facilities, including drugs and weapons.
- Contraband delivered by drones is extremely dangerous for the incarcerated population and correctional officers, as it increases the risk of violence. Photographs and recorded images taken by drones can expose security vulnerabilities by showing a bird's eye view of staff rotations and movement of the incarcerated population.
- The bill is an essential measure against the persistent and ongoing threat of drone intrusion over correctional facilities that will only escalate as incarcerated individuals continue to test the boundaries of this vulnerable airspace.

**CONCLUSION:** The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** Committee vote on Senate Bill 273.

STATE OF MARYLAND

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# **MCPA-MSA\_SB 273 Unmanned Aircraft Contriband\_Suppo**

Uploaded by: Natasha Mehu

Position: FAV



# 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.