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Colonel George R. Hardinger
Warden

January 29, 2020

Senator Justin Ready
Carroll County District 5
Judicial Proceedings Committee
11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Ready,

I'm writing to show my support for Senate Bill 332 and Senate Bill 197.

As the elected sheriff for Carroll County I oversee both law enforcement and corrections. The Carroll County Detention Center (CCDC) has an average daily population that stays at approximately 150 inmates. Of the 150 inmates approximately 85% are male and 15% are female. The Carroll County Detention Center is considered a temporary holding facility with about half sentenced and half pretrial or waiting for a court adjudication. The average sentence, or actual time served in the Carroll County Detention Center is between 3-9 months. The maximum sentence the courts can impose on an individual that would stay at the CCDC would be 18 months. Any sentence over 18 months would be considered state time and the inmate would be promptly transferred to the Maryland Department of Corrections for appropriate placement.

Deputies in my office assigned to the CCDC regularly communicate with the Department of Homeland Security (HSI) regarding immigration issues. Approximately 10 times a year we have an inmate that has an open detainer or warrant through HSI. Once we learn the detainer or warrant exists, we immediately communicate with HSI to discuss and mitigate the issue. Oftentimes HSI is not interested in pursuing the detainer once they learn the inmate is going to be released on bond. But there are times HSI wants to take custody of the individual before they are released on bond from CCDC. Once we learn HSI wants to take custody of the inmate we promptly notify them through facsimile and advise HSI that they have 48 hours to come and take custody of the inmate.

SHERIFF SERVICES

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DETENTION CENTER

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SB 332 is a mirror image of our current policy when communicating with HSI on individuals we have in custody that they have a detainer or a warrant for. My office has been doing this successfully for years and have no plans to change our policy. Furthermore, I simply can't and won't have any legislative body tell me I can't communicate with another law enforcement agency regarding matters of public safety in my county; regardless of whether they are local, state or federal law enforcement.

I have a wonderful and cooperative relationship with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies throughout the region. I'm also a partner with HSI to combat the heroin and opioid epidemic issue in my county and throughout the region. I have two HSI officers assigned to our multijurisdictional narcotics task force and regularly work with them on human trafficking issues in Carroll County. My relationship with them is strong and any legislation that would attempt to undermine that would be in direct conflict with my constitutional oath.

James T. DeWees
Sheriff – Carroll County Maryland