



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chairman and
Members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Chief David Morris, Co-Chair, MCPA, Joint Legislative Committee
Sheriff Darren Popkin, Co-Chair, MSA, Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 18, 2020

RE: **HB 622 Correctional Services – Correctional Officers – Minimum Age Requirement**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT** HB 622. This bill proposes to alter the minimum age requirement for employment as a correctional officer in any unit of the Division of Correction, the Division of Pretrial Detention and Services, or the Patuxent Institution within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS).

The Correctional Services Article prescribes a minimum age for State Correctional Officers, however, county correctional facilities have been able to hire officers at a minimum age of 18 years, in accordance with COMAR 12.10.01.04.

There are currently 24 county correctional facilities in Maryland.

The primary difference between a county correctional facility and a State correctional facility is the amount of time an individual may be held.

- County correctional facilities are for short-term sentences.
- State correctional facilities are for long-term incarceration.

Despite the time differences, officers working in county correctional facilities have care and custody of individuals who may be sentenced to State facilities.

A county correctional facility's original purpose is to receive and hold individuals who are pending trial, conviction, or sentencing at the county level. They are final points for inmates sentenced to short terms (less than three years).

County correctional facilities may also:

- Hold those who are awaiting pick-up from other sources (i.e., parole violators to be picked up by the state, mentally ill waiting to move to health facilities, etc.);
- Provide protective custody for those in contempt of court and for court witnesses; and
- Provide temporary housing for State prisoners when State facilities are overcrowded.

Given the success county correctional facilities have had employing officers who are 18 years and older, we support the alteration of the hiring age for State correctional officers to a minimum age of 19 years.

HB 622 will expand the pool of applicants and assist the Department in continuing to increase the number of Correctional Officers it hires without lowering the bar.

For this reason, MCPA and MSA SUPPORT HB 622 and urge a FAVORABLE committee report.