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SHERIFF

HARFORD COUNTY

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

House Bill 1348 - Support

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Criminal Procedure –Sex Offender Registration- Indecent Exposure by Inmate

Letter of Support to the House Judicial Proceedings

February 21, 2020

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Judicial Proceedings Committee, I write to you today in full support of House Bill 1348. This legislation will protect our professional female correctional officers, medical staff, social workers and legal staff who work each day inside of our prisons and detention centers in the state of Maryland.

These professional employees work in challenging conditions to provided important public safety services to the citizens of Maryland and should not work in fear of inmates who wish to expose themselves to these employees. Inmates who take part in these acts are exposing these employees to an extreme an unnecessary form of workplace sexual harassment and preventing them from providing necessary and important services to the rest of our inmate population.

Inmates across the state are targeting these female employees and attempting to humiliate and intimidate them by standing on bunks, toilets and benches to force the female employee to see them engaging in lude acts. As you will hear from testimony from members of the Harford County Sheriff's Office, these acts are occurring regularly inside of our facilities.

This legislation will expand the penalties for public indecency for incarcerated individuals and hold them accountable for their actions by opening up the possibility of these offenders being placed on the sex offender registry after the 2nd act of public indecency inside of the facility where they are incarcerated. Ensuring that our public safety employees and partners, who work in our jails and detention centers, are able to do their job in an environment free from unnecessary and damaging harassment should be a top priority of this Committee.

The men and women of the Harford County Sheriff's Office appreciate your attention to this issue and we are hopeful for a favorable report on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Jeff Gahler