



A Union of Professionals
AFT-Maryland

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**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Economic Matters Committee
HB 85 - Baltimore County - Workers' Compensation - Permanent Partial Disability -
Detention and Correctional Officers
February 2, 2021**

SUPPORT

Chair Davis and members of the committee. On behalf of the American Federation of Teachers - Maryland (AFT-Maryland), which represents more than 20,000 state, county and municipal workers across Maryland, we ask for a favorable report on HB 85.

This bill would provide enhanced workers' compensation benefits for a Baltimore County correctional and detention officers for permanent and partial disability on the job. It would allow the dedicated correctional officers of Baltimore County to join their fellow police officers and firefighters in receiving better workplace injury compensation.

In 2018, Governor Hogan signed HB 205 into law. It allowed county correctional officers to join police officers and firefighters in receiving enhanced compensation for workplace injuries. So far, Allegany, Anne Arundel, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince Georges Counties' correctional and detention officers have received the enhanced benefits.

Correctional and detention officers are exposed to unique workplace hazards within a controlled prison environment. Of all U.S. workers, correctional officers have one of the highest rates of work-related injuries.¹

Security and stability in prisons is critical to protect the public and ensure the safety of inmates. This responsibility falls heavily on the shoulders of front-line correctional and detention officers. They must maintain peaceful order within facilities and between inmates with histories of mental illness, substance abuse and violence, and must routinely put themselves in harm's way. For these reasons, we ask the committee for a favorable report on HB 85. Thank you.

Marietta English
President

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses requiring days away from work. 2011 Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/osh2.nr0.htm>.