



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: Senate Bill 322 – Health – Health and Wellness Standards – Correctional Facilities and Health Care Facilities

SPONSOR: Senator Benson

HEARING DATE: February 11, 2021

COMMITTEE: Finance

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive strongly **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 322 – Health – Health and Wellness Standards – Correctional Facilities and Health Care Facilities**, which requires specified health care facilities to offer plant-based meal options, plant-based food options, and plant-based beverages. The bill also establishes a Correctional Facilities Health and Wellness Pilot Program in which four correctional facilities selected for the pilot are required to offer plant-based meal options, plant-based food options, and plant-based beverages for general consumption.

Whether healthcare and correctional facilities offer plant-based meals as a Meatless Mondays or fulltime meal option as in CA, AZ, NY, and other jurisdictions, there are significant health, climate, and fiscal benefits to individuals and facility operators. In addition, some jurisdictions have determined plant-based meals meet the requirements of kosher and halal diets and other religions thereby simplifying meal preparation.

Hospitals nationwide are offering patients plant-based food options that combat—rather than contribute—to chronic health conditions our population has struggled with. Eating meatless once a week can reduce a person's risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity. The American Medical Association and American College of Cardiology recommend a plant-forward diet saying a “hospitalization can be a ‘teachable moment’ for patients who are ready to embrace nutrition as part of the healing process.”

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive strongly **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 322** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.