

Marietta English
PRESIDENT

Kenya Campbell
SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
HB 735 - Correctional Officers, Law Enforcement Officers, and Fire, Rescue, and
Emergency Services Personnel (Hometown Heroes Act)
February 11, 2021**

SUPPORT

Chair Kaiser and members of the committee – on behalf of the 20,000 members of the American Federation of Teachers – Maryland (AFT-Maryland), we ask for a favorable report on HB 735 - Income Tax Subtraction Modification - Hometown Heroes. This is an important bill for workers because it will help ensure a secure and dignified retirement, to recruit and retain correctional officers, and put money back into the state and local communities.

Correctional officers, police and fire fighters, cannot be expected to stay on the job into their 60s. The physical, mental and emotional toils of the job often require them to retire earlier than most other professions. This can leave a tremendous financial burden on our Hometown Heroes and their families and can lead to a less dignified retirement.

In addition, it is getting more difficult to recruit and retain good officers. Competitive salaries and benefits are needed to keep good people on the job in our state. The long term cost of this bill could be offset by the immediate funds needed to recruit and train new personnel.

Finally, keeping retirees in the state after retirement is important. Their contributions to communities are needed. The money the retirees save on taxes would be pumped back into the local economies. According to the National Institute of Retirement Security, for every \$1 a retiree spends it creates \$1.98 in economic activity¹.

Thank you for your time. We urge a favorable report on HB 735.

Marietta English
President

¹ National Institute on Retirement Security: Pensionomics 2014
(http://www.nirsonline.org/storage/nirs/documents/Pensionomics%202014/pensionomics2014_final.pdf)