

Testimony

HB 763 – Correctional Officers' Retirement System - Membership Appropriations

February 17, 2022 Support with Amendments

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I would like to thank madam chair and the rest of the House Appropriations committee as well as AFSCME Council 3 for giving me the opportunity to speak to you all today in regards to HB 763 which would add certain job classifications within the Department of Juvenile Services to the CORS retirement system.

I would like to solicit your support for HB 763, this legislation, with amendment, would add the Department of Juvenile Services' Case Management Specialists I, II, III, Supervisor, Program Supervisor, and Group Life Managers I and II to the Correctional Officers Retirement System (CORS). In recent years there have been other job classifications within DJS that were added to the CORS retirement system but after amendments the classifications that I previously mentioned were left out of the legislation. Although our job titles would make it seem that we are management positions our jobs are comparable to classifications in DPSCS that are already eligible for CORS. Speaking specifically for the Residential Case Manager series as well as Group Life Managers, we are front line workers. We are identified as essential employees who are required to report regardless of exigent conditions. In the facility, we work with the highest risk offenders in the State of Maryland. Our population consists of youth who have exhausted all other community based options and require further rehabilitation. Our job classifications receive the same entry level and annual refresher trainings as job classifications within DJS that are already included in CORS, in addition to job specific trainings. The above job classifications are integral in the daily operation of the facilities in which we work. These job classifications represent some of the more tenured and experienced staff that work in facilities. In an effort to recruit and retain the most experienced staff to these positions it would be beneficial to be included in the same retirement system as employees we are working beside and supervising on a daily basis.

Adding these job classifications to CORS should aid in keeping the most experienced staff with the department, as well as encourage other qualified employees, who were otherwise concerned about extending the length of their career, to explore other career options within the department. In addition it helps to fix a disparity that was created in 2018 when some job classifications from DJS were added to this pension system and some were not. I would like to thank Delegate Bridges and Wells for sponsoring the bill and ask this committee for a favorable report in regards to HB763.