



TALBOT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
115 W. DOVER ST EASTON, MD 21601

Terry Kokolis
Director

Chris Tyler
Deputy Director

TO: Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair, Appropriations Committee
Delegate Mark Chang, Vice Chair, Appropriations Committee

SUBJECT: **SB997/HB1476 Correctional Officers' Retirement System-Talbot County**

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chairperson McIntosh,

The Talbot County Department of Corrections has experienced difficulty in both attracting and retaining qualified staff to fill positions. Correctional Officer is the primary position all jurisdictions in Maryland are attempting to recruit and the vacancy rates are high. Many reasons for this but working as a Correctional Officer is inherently dangerous on many levels of today's environment. The greatest concern is the level of stress exasperated by working shift work with an inmate population prone to agitation, substance use and an ever increasing diagnosis of medicated and un-medicated mental health conditions. The paradigm change created by Justice Reinvestment, Bail Reform and Pre Trial Services Reform has created a jail population of many who don't fit or benefit from those three major Legislative Initiatives.

SB997/HB1476 will importantly provide the support necessary to influence safe operations by employing an experienced and well trained work force. It will importantly contribute to a decrease in turnover rates and equally important, provide attainable goals for staff to commit and make Talbot County a career choice.

Membership in CORS already includes many other county Departments of Corrections, all previous members of the Maryland Employees' Pension System, so I strongly request favorable support for SB997/HB1476 on April 8, 2022.

Thank you and best regards,

Terry Kokolis, Director