



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William Smith, Jr., Chair and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Natasha Mehu, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 22, 2023

RE: **SB 702 – Correctional Services - State Correctional Facilities - Unauthorized
Operation of Unmanned Aircraft**

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS SB 702**. This bill would prohibit the operation of unmanned aircraft above state correctional facilities.

The prohibitions in SB 702 are targeted at drones and similar technology. These devices can be used to aerially surveil and access sensitive areas of the facilities that would otherwise be inaccessible to outsiders or those without special privileges. Contraband is a very real and very dangerous issue in correctional facilities and drones make it easier for people to remotely get contraband onto facility grounds. The prohibitions and penalties in this bill are necessary precautions against the nefarious actions of those using drones to get access to people and places behind the walls of correctional facilities.

Unfortunately, the bill does not include local correctional facilities which face the same safety concerns as their state counterparts. Local jails are unable to independently impose restrictions on the use of unmanned aircraft above their facilities as state law prohibits anyone but the state from enacting a law or taking other official action to restrict, prohibit, or otherwise regulate the testing or operation of drones. Therefore, MCPA and MSA request an amendment to expand the prohibition against the operation of unmanned aircraft to local correctional facilities unless authorized by the local correctional administrator or the local correctional administrator's designee.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT SB 702** and urge a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** Committee report.

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