



Worcester County Government
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February 26, 2024

Delegate Ben Barnes
Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
ben.barnes@house.state.md.us

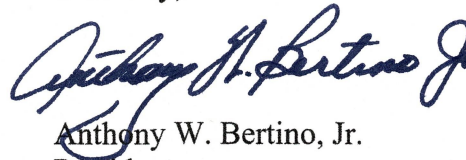
Delegate Mark S. Chang
Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Mark.Chang@house.state.md.us

Dear Appropriations Committee Chair Delegate Barnes, Vice Chair Delegate Chang, and members:

The Worcester County Commissioners unanimously support HB 899 Higher Education – Firefighters and EMS Recruitment and Retention – Scholarship and Loan Repayment Assistance. Fire and ambulance companies operating in Worcester County have been struggling to attract, train, and retain fire and emergency medical service (EMS) personnel. This critical workforce shortage in Worcester County and across the state is unsustainable and could result in increased fire and EMS response times and threaten patient care.

The ability to cover 100% of tuition costs at a two-year institution or 50% of tuition costs at a four-year institution through the Charles W. Riley Firefighter and Ambulance and Rescue Squad Member Scholarship Fund will be a powerful tool for attracting and retaining highly qualified fire and EMS staff. We thank you for your consideration of this request and urge you to support this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anthony W. Bertino, Jr." in a cursive style.

Anthony W. Bertino, Jr.
President

cc: Senator Mary Beth Carozza
Delegate Wayne Hartman
Delegate Charles Otto