



Senate Bill 1101

Scholarships and Police Officer Recruitment

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

WITH AMENDMENTS

Date: February 27, 2024

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 1101 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill seeks to bolster diversity in the public safety workforce and enhance access to higher education for officers.

Law enforcement officials are the foundation of public safety. Broadening eligibility for funding from scholarship programs to long-term employees, and not just entry-level officers, sends an important message about how much governments and communities value these roles. This is a resource that local law enforcement agencies can use to build and sustain a qualified and enthusiastic workforce of employees while incentivizing their professional longevity.

Although the Tier I and Tier II scholarship opportunities outlined in the bill extend more resources for higher education to law enforcement officers, detention center employees take comparable risks and deserve equal consideration for incentives. Additionally, the opportunities outlined are only useful to the degree that they are resourced with appropriate funding. Counties appreciate the expanded opportunity for law enforcement but would encourage both the inclusion of corrections officers, as well as adequate funding for the programs.

Incentives and opportunities for continual growth and improvement are vital to ensuring employees see a fulfilling future for themselves in these critical public safety roles. MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for SB 1101.