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Patrick Moran – President

**SB 470 - Growing Apprenticeships and the Public Safety Workforce (GAPS) Act
Judicial Proceedings
February 9, 2024**

LETTER OF INFORMATION

AFSCME Council 3 respectfully submits this letter of information for your consideration of SB 470. This legislation replaces the Law Enforcement Cadet Apprenticeship Program in the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) to become the Public Safety Apprenticeship Program which now includes state correctional officers and juvenile services workers. AFSCME Council 3 is the exclusive bargaining representative for these workers. In the bill, MDL continues to administer the program and awards grants under the program to eligible public safety agencies who employ at least one apprentice who has been employed by the agency for at least 7 months and is in a registered apprenticeship program with the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council (MATC).

The [final report](#) of the Workgroup on Apprenticeships in Public Safety highlighted that a “*crucial next step for program development is engagement and inclusion of the union(s) who represent the bargaining unit for each respective position.*” Additionally, the report states, “*registered apprenticeship regulations require employers to engage with unions whenever an apprenticeship program is proposed for workers.*”

To date, no one has contacted AFSCME regarding the proposed apprenticeship programs being established in SB 470.

Further, the Workgroup’s very first recommendation for Apprenticeships in Public Safety in Maryland was to “*encourage government agencies to partner with MD Labor, DBM, LWDBs, and Bargaining Units to assess workforce needs and explore apprenticeship options.*” This recommendation singles out DBM’s role for initiating these discussions with employee unions, and this conversation has not happened yet either.

While AFSCME supports the development of apprenticeships in our bargaining units, SB 470 might be premature given that none of the prerequisite discussions have occurred, including on which types of jobs should be apprenticeable. We continue to oppose efforts to bring correctional workers under the required minimum age of 21 into our state prisons and have similar concerns about youth workers in juvenile detention settings. Thank for your considering this letter of information.