



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Senator William Smith, Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office, 2 East
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS: SB 470: Growing Apprenticeships and Public Safety Workforce (GAPS) Act**

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

I commend Governor Moore for investing in Maryland's dedicated public safety workforce, strengthening existing pathways for apprenticeships, and establishing a law enforcement officer wellness program. I encourage you to consider including the friendly amendment proposed by the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) to include corrections officials in the membership and mission of the proposed effort.

Howard County is home to the safest city in Maryland and one of the safest in America. We received this designation, in large part, due to our continuous efforts to invest in those who give selflessly to their community. In 2023, we added 24 new patrol positions to the Howard County Police Department, the largest increase in sworn personnel in over a decade. Just a few short weeks ago, we graduated 28 recruits, which is our largest academy class in three decades, who will be joining our force. In addition, we are excited to welcome the 22 new recruits who will enter the Howard County Police Academy next week. Just last month, our Department of Corrections earned prestigious national accreditation from the American Correctional Association, making us only the second local jurisdiction in Maryland to earn the industry's highest accreditation. Yet, we know that ongoing recruitment for these positions is a key aspect in ensuring a diverse and high-quality force.

In Howard County, we know that we must do our part to ensure the workforce and employment needs of our residents are being met. As one of the first local jurisdictions in the State to reactivate county government apprenticeships, we are committed to providing residents of all ages the resources they need to promote economic mobility. Each year, we host 20 programs with a combined enrollment of nearly 1,400 apprentices who are eagerly learning how to be the next generation of public servants. Senate Bill 470 will help create a pipeline of talented residents who will serve our community and help keep us safe. I welcome your support and respectfully request a favorable with amendments report on Senate Bill 470.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive