



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of the Secretary

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BILL: HOUSE BILL 597

POSITION: SUPPORT

STATE OF MARYLAND

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GOVERNOR

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EXPLANATION: House Bill 597 establishes a Public Safety Apprenticeship Program within the Department of Labor for the purpose of providing career opportunities for young individuals within public safety agencies. The bill also requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop mental health wellness policies that will promote safety and wellness at the entry level law enforcement agency.

COMMENTS:

- HB 597 provides Public Safety agencies such as DPSCS the opportunity to create positive relationships between young people, the community and corrections agencies.
- Creating environments where people feel supported and valued is imperative in retaining our public safety workforce.
- The Department is committed to addressing the challenge of staffing shortages in our correctional facilities.
- DPSCS has made significant strides in reducing its overall vacancy rate, thanks to an improvement in recruitment strategies. HB597 would only provide a boost to these efforts.
- The bill allows agencies to establish apprenticeships with the ability to offset the additional cost burden these programs can have on agencies.
- Programs such as those created by HB597 show that the Governor indeed believes that no matter where you start in life, you deserve an equal opportunity to succeed.

CONCLUSION: For these reasons, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully asks this Committee to vote **FAVORABLY** on House Bill 597.