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Patrick Moran – President

**SB 768 – Correctional Officers’ Retirement System – Membership –
Clarifications
Budget and Taxation Committee
February 27, 2025**

Position: FAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 strongly supports SB 768, which clarifies the inclusion of certain positions in the Correctional Officers’ Retirement System (CORS), as outlined in Chapters 135 and 136 of 2024. This legislation specifically addresses workers employed at Maryland’s forensic facilities within the Department of Health (MDH). Last year’s legislation established parity for staff at Perkins Hospital, aligning their benefits with those at other forensic facilities performing similar duties. SB 768 continues this important progression.

These positions are demanding and take a significant physical toll on workers. Granting these employees the opportunity to retire after 20 years of service is essential to ensuring they can retire with dignity. SB 768 is a crucial step forward, and we encourage the committee to issue a favorable report. Thank you.

The following states that have collective bargaining for state employees, AK, CA, CT, DC, DE, HI, IL, ME, MN, NE, NJ, NM, NV, OH, OR, PA, MT, RI, WA have a terminal point for negotiations, either binding interest arbitration, the right to strike, or a legislative process. These processes create a level playing field for both parties.

This legislation would create a mutual incentive to compel parties to reach an agreement around collective bargaining negotiations by instilling a binding interest arbitration process, whereby if the two sides cannot come to agreement through negotiations by a specified deadline the proposals.

From the two sides would be presented to a professional, neutral third- party arbitrator – hearing from witnesses and experts, with data and evidence – for consideration of all the facts involved with the purpose of determining which proposal is most appropriate to implement. The choice by the arbitrator would then be considered a binding resolution to be implemented by the Governor and exclusive bargaining representative for whatever appropriations are necessary to implement and fund the memorandum of understanding. The budgetary powers of the Maryland General Assembly remain unaltered.

SB 188 is a strong and positive step toward enhancing fairness, balance, and efficiency, and resolution. It follows a model that is well-established in other states and among Maryland counties. We urge a favorable report.

