



## Senate Bill 690

### *Higher Education - Scholarships for Correctional Officers*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Committee

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From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 690**. This bill expands eligibility for the Maryland Police Officers and Probation Agents Scholarship Program to include correctional officers.

SB 690 extends higher education resources, currently limited to law enforcement, to include detention center officers. There is a great deal of crossover between the corrections and law enforcement workforces, which is why considering their needs together will make them both stronger independent agencies. The adjustments represent an opportunity for local governments to build and sustain a qualified and enthusiastic workforce of employees while incentivizing their professional development and career longevity.

Broadening eligibility for funding from scholarship programs to include local correctional officers sends an important message about how much governments and communities value these roles. As the rehabilitative arm of the justice system, corrections officers look out for and care for some of Maryland's most vulnerable populations. Prioritizing professional development and continued education has the potential to increase the pool of candidates looking to join this vital work force. Additionally, the skills and knowledge acquired through post-secondary education can have a substantial influence on the quality of work performed and services provided in detention centers. There is no question this can have a significant impact on successful reentry and recidivism rates for returning citizens.

MACo commends the expansion of eligibility to corrections officers for these opportunities that promote continual growth and improvement. This is paramount to ensuring employees see a fulfilling future for themselves in these critical public safety roles. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report for **SB 690**.