

# **SB 690 - Scholarships for Correctional Officers.pd**

Uploaded by: Denise Riley

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the  
Environment Committee  
SB 690 - Higher Education - Scholarships for Correctional Officers  
March 5, 2025**

**FAVORABLE**

Chair Feldman and members of the Committee, AFT Maryland supports SB 690, which seeks to expand the Maryland Police Officers and Probation Agents Scholarship Program to include correctional officers. This legislation represents a critical step to recognize the essential role that correctional officers play in our criminal justice system and provides them with the educational opportunities necessary for career advancement and professional development.

Correctional officers are an integral part of Maryland's public safety network. In the critical nature of their work, correctional officers often face significant professional challenges, including high levels of stress, demanding work conditions, and limited career advancement opportunities without further education. Expanding the existing scholarship program to include correctional officers acknowledges their service and provides them with a valuable resource to pursue higher education and training.

SB 690 aligns with Maryland's commitment to strengthen its public safety workforce by offering tuition assistance to those seeking to enter or advance within the field. By extending scholarships to correctional officers, the state can help attract and retain qualified individuals who are dedicated to maintaining safety and security in our correctional institutions. Moreover, higher education opportunities will enable these professionals to develop leadership skills, improve rehabilitation efforts, and contribute to evidence-based practices within the correctional system.

SB 690 is an investment in the education, training, and retention of Maryland's correctional officers. Their work is essential to public safety, and this legislation will help ensure they receive the support they need to succeed in their critical roles. Thank you.



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

Uploaded by: Derrick Coley

Position: FAV



**Maryland Higher Education Commission**  
**Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**  
**Senate Bill 690**  
**Higher Education - Scholarships for Correctional Officers**  
**March 5, 2025**

**1:00 PM**  
**Favorable**

Good afternoon Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 690. Thank you to Senators Jack Bailey and Will Smith for sponsoring this legislation.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission is committed to expanding educational opportunities in Maryland by addressing financial aid needs of students. Senate Bill 690 seeks to expand educational assistance scholarships to include correctional officers.

A law enforcement scholarship for correctional officers is a vital investment in public safety, professional development, and workforce retention. Correctional officers play a critical role in maintaining order, rehabilitation, and security within the criminal justice system. Providing educational benefits through a dedicated scholarship program acknowledges their service while equipping them with the skills needed to enhance their effectiveness, leadership, and long-term career prospects.

By supporting higher education for correctional officers, this scholarship can improve job performance, reduce burnout, and promote retention in a field that struggles with high turnover rates. Access to degree programs in criminal justice, psychology, social work, and related fields can also help officers better address the complexities of inmate rehabilitation and crisis intervention. Furthermore, investing in their education strengthens the overall correctional system by fostering a more knowledgeable, skilled, and professional workforce.

This scholarship is not just a benefit to individual officers, but also a commitment to public safety and the continuous improvement of the correctional system. Maryland's ability to prioritize education will empower correctional officers to grow in their careers while enhancing the effectiveness and integrity of our justice system as a whole.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 690.

# **SB0690\_MACC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Drew Jabin

Position: FAV

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

March 5, 2025

**SB 690 – Higher Education - Scholarships for Correctional Officers****Position: Favorable**

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The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **SB 690**, which expands the Maryland Police Officers and Probation Agents Scholarship Program to include correctional officers. This change acknowledges the vital role correctional officers play in Maryland's public safety system and ensures they have the same access to financial assistance as other law enforcement professionals.

Community colleges serve as key training providers for Maryland's public safety workforce, offering affordable, high-quality education that prepares students for careers in law enforcement, probation, and corrections. Expanding this scholarship program ensures that correctional officers, like police officers and probation agents, can pursue the education and training necessary to succeed in their field without financial barriers.

Maryland's correctional system relies on highly skilled professionals to ensure safety, security, and rehabilitation within facilities across the State. By making higher education more accessible to correctional officers, SB 690 strengthens the workforce pipeline for these essential roles and helps attract and retain dedicated professionals in a challenging and critical field.

Expanding scholarship eligibility is a practical investment in Maryland's public safety infrastructure, supporting both new students entering the profession and current professionals seeking to advance their careers. Ensuring access to education for correctional officers will enhance training, improve job readiness, and contribute to safer communities statewide. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **SB 690**.

Please contact Brad Phillips ([bphillips@mdacc.org](mailto:bphillips@mdacc.org)) or Drew Jabin ([djabin@mdacc.org](mailto:djabin@mdacc.org)) with questions.

# **SenatorBailey\_FAV\_SB690.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV



JACK BAILEY  
Legislative District 29  
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



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March 5, 2025

**Senate Bill 690 - Higher Education - Scholarships for Correctional Officers**

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 690. This bill would expand eligibility for the Maryland Police Officers and Probation Agents Scholarship Program to include correctional officers.

In 2021, as part of the Maryland Police Accountability Act, the General Assembly created the Maryland Police Officers Scholarship Program. This program was created because of research which showed how higher education for police officers is beneficial to more than just the officer receiving the degree. A review of the research indicates that police officers who have graduated from college are less likely to be the subject of citizen complaints. In 2023, the General Assembly passed legislation to add probation agents to this scholarship program, and last year, we passed legislation allowing police officers and probation agents to use this scholarship at community colleges in addition to four-year institutions. I strongly believe in this scholarship program and have been working over the past several months with the Maryland Higher Education Commission on how to increase the utilization of this program through greater outreach to our State's police officers.

During the interim, I was approached by correctional officers in my district who shared with me that, as currently drafted, correctional officers are not included in the list of individuals who are eligible for the Police Officers and Probation Agents Scholarship Program. Therefore, I have introduced this bill to ensure that correctional officers are included in the program. At this time when recruitment and retention of public safety officers in all fields, including correctional officers, is so critical, this bill will aid in those efforts while also providing the State with the benefits that come with more correctional officers receiving a college education.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 690. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey", written over a horizontal line.

Senator Jack Bailey

# **SB0690-EEE\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sarah Sample

Position: FAV



## Senate Bill 690

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

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Committee

Date: March 5, 2025

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**.