



**House Bill 789**

*Courtroom Security-Minimum Adequate Security Standard*

Position: UNF

Date: **February 12, 2025**

To: **Judiciary**

On behalf of the Caroline County Commissioners, we wish to express our **strong opposition** for **House Bill 789, Courtroom Security—Minimum Adequate Security Standard**, which would impose new courtroom security requirements across Maryland. While we recognize the importance of maintaining safe and secure court facilities, this bill presents serious financial and staffing challenges for rural counties like ours.

Caroline County already faces significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining law enforcement officers. With law enforcement agencies across the state struggling to fill vacancies, this unfunded mandate would only increase the strain on our resources. Hiring and training additional court security officers will not only be expensive but may also divert personnel from other critical public safety duties.

The bill mandates a substantial increase in security staffing requirements by 2026 and further escalates them by 2028. For a small county like Caroline, this means a sharp rise in costs for personnel salaries, training, and benefits—without any identified state funding assistance. Additionally, the requirement for multiple officers per proceeding and per floor places an undue burden on our already limited workforce.

We urge the committee to consider the practical implications of this bill for rural jurisdictions. At a minimum, the state should provide dedicated funding to assist counties in meeting these new standards. Otherwise, this mandate will force counties to reprioritize limited resources, potentially affecting other essential services.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and respectfully request that you oppose House Bill 789 in its current form. If security enhancements are deemed necessary, they should be accompanied by adequate financial support and flexibility to ensure counties can implement them without undue hardship.

Sincerely,

J. Travis Breeding, President