

Approvals:

- ~~OSFA~~
- ~~Secretary Rai~~
- ~~Mike Thomas~~

Submit to MGA

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 1505 — Higher Education – Loan Repayment and Scholarships for Correctional Officers. This legislation expands existing State loan repayment and scholarship programs for public safety professionals to include correctional officers, recognizing their essential role in maintaining public safety and supporting community stability

Senate Bill 101 would amend current law to make correctional officers eligible for the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP) for Police Officers and Probation Agents and the Maryland Police Officers and Probation Agents Scholarship Program. By extending these important financial incentives to correctional officers, the State strengthens recruitment and retention in a field that is critical to the safety and well-being of Maryland communities.

Public safety personnel, including correctional officers, serve on the front lines of justice and rehabilitation, often under challenging conditions. Access to loan repayment and scholarship support can lower barriers to entering and remaining in these careers, ultimately contributing to a more effective and stable public safety workforce.

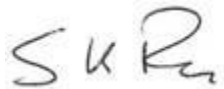
MHEC supports the intent of HB 1505 and appreciates the opportunity to expand access to existing scholarship and loan-repayment programs for correctional officers. To ensure successful implementation, the Commission notes the following considerations:

- Effective and timely implementation will benefit from additional staffing and system resources to support expanded eligibility, maintain program integrity, and ensure accurate and equitable award administration.
- Expanding eligibility to include an additional career pathway increases the number of individuals who may apply for existing scholarship and loan repayment programs. While Senate Bill 101 does not increase the total funding available for the scholarship or LARP, expanding eligibility may increase demand and competition within the existing funding structure.

These considerations are provided to facilitate a smooth implementation and to maintain efficient, transparent program administration for all eligible applicants, without resulting in long-term fiscal operating costs.

For these reasons, the Maryland Higher Education Commission respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 1505. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Meghan Music, Executive Director of External and Legislative Relations.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S K Rai". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.
Secretary
Maryland Higher Education Commission