

JUSTIN READY
Legislative District 5
Carroll County

MINORITY WHIP
Finance Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
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SB 449 – Workers' Compensation - Heart Disease and Hypertension Presumption and Permanent Partial Disability - Carroll County Correctional Deputies

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Finance Committee:

Senate Bill 449 authorizes an amendment to Maryland’s workers’ compensation law to extend the presumption of compensability for heart disease and hypertension to Carroll County correctional deputies.

Under existing Maryland law, certain public safety employees—including police officers and firefighters—are granted a legal presumption that heart disease or hypertension resulting in disability or death is an occupational disease related to their employment. However, Carroll County correctional deputies are not currently included within that statutory protection.

Senate Bill 449 addresses this gap by altering the definition of “public safety employee” within the Labor and Employment Article to include Carroll County correctional deputies. Specifically, the bill:

- Adds Carroll County correctional deputies to the list of employees eligible for the presumption of compensability under §9-503 of the Labor and Employment Article;
- Includes correctional deputies under §9-628 for purposes of workers’ compensation provisions relating to permanent partial disability benefits; and
- Establishes eligibility requirements and documentation standards for deputies seeking the presumption.

Under this legislation, if a correctional deputy suffers from heart disease or hypertension that results in partial disability or death, the condition will be presumed to be work-related, unless the employer can demonstrate otherwise.

This presumption ensures that affected employees are able to receive workers’ compensation benefits that may include:

- Payment of medical costs related to the condition;
- Reimbursement for lost wages during recovery;

- Permanent disability benefits when an impairment prevents continued work; and
- Death benefits for surviving family members in the event of a fatal occupational illness.

Correctional deputies work in demanding and high-stress environments that require constant vigilance and the management of incarcerated populations. The physical and psychological stress associated with these duties is widely recognized as a contributing factor to cardiovascular conditions such as heart disease and hypertension.

Maryland law already recognizes this occupational risk for other public safety personnel. Senate Bill 449 simply extends that same recognition to correctional deputies serving in Carroll County.

The bill also includes reasonable safeguards. Deputies employed by September 30, 2026 must provide a medical report by December 31, 2026 disclosing any existing heart disease or hypertension as a condition of continued employment and eligibility for the presumption.

By doing so, the legislation maintains transparency while ensuring that deputies who develop these conditions as a result of their service are protected.

Senate Bill 449 is a targeted and responsible measure that aligns the protections afforded to Carroll County correctional deputies with those already provided to other public safety professionals across Maryland.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 449.

Thank you for your consideration.