

JACK BAILEY
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Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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Senate Bill 101 - Higher Education - Loan Repayment and Scholarships for Correctional Officers

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 101. This bill would expand eligibility for the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Police Officers and Probation Agents and 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 Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Police Officers and the Maryland Police Officers Scholarship Program. These programs were 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 both programs, and in 2024, 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 with the Maryland Higher Education Commission on how to increase the utilization of these programs through greater outreach to our State's police officers.

Last year, 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 these two programs. Therefore, I have introduced this bill to ensure that correctional officers are included in these programs. 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 101. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bailey'.

Senator Jack Bailey