



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

POSITION STATEMENT

Senate Bill 690

Senator Bailey

Higher Education - Scholarships for Correctional Officers

POSITION

SUPPORT FAVORABLE

The Prince George's County Council supports the Senate Bill 690 - Higher Education – Scholarships for Correctional officers, which expands the Maryland Police Officers and Probation Agents Scholarship Program to include correctional officers. This legislation is essential for ensuring that correctional officers receive the same educational opportunities as their law enforcement and probation counterparts, recognizing their critical role in maintaining public safety.

Correctional officers serve on the front lines of the justice system, managing facilities, rehabilitating offenders, and ensuring the safety and security of both staff and inmates. Despite their indispensable contributions, these professionals have historically been overlooked in scholarship opportunities designed to support career advancement in public safety. Senate Bill 690 corrects this oversight and provides a direct pathway for correctional officers to access higher education, enhancing their ability to perform their duties effectively while fostering professional growth.

Importantly, this bill mandates a dedicated funding appropriation of \$5 million annually to support scholarships, with a specific allocation for both aspiring and current correctional officers. The Prince George's County Council's support for this bill is contingent upon the assurance that at no point will the financial responsibility for these scholarships be deferred to counties. The state must uphold its commitment to funding this program, ensuring that counties are not burdened with additional financial obligations that could strain local resources.

By investing in the education of correctional officers, Maryland demonstrates its commitment to a well-trained, highly skilled workforce in its correctional institutions. This investment not only benefits the individuals who receive scholarships but also enhances public safety, improves workforce retention, and strengthens community trust in the criminal justice system.

For these reasons, the Prince George's County Council urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 690, with the firm stipulation that the funding remains a state responsibility and is never shifted to the counties. We appreciate the Committee's consideration and stand ready to assist in ensuring the successful implementation of this vital initiative.

Prepared by: Ashlar Government Relations on behalf of Prince George's County Council

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