



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of House Bill HB446

Correctional Officers' Retirement System - Membership - Chaplains

February 4, 2020

Chairman McIntosh, Vice Chair Jackson and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Religion has played a substantial role in the early foundation of the American correctional system. In fact, penitentiaries earned their name from being designed for inmates doing penitence from their sins. With religion being viewed as one of the only ways criminals could turn away from a life of crime, prison chaplains were entrusted with overseeing this transition.

However, the evolution of the prison chaplaincy role gradually diminished with each passing year of the 1900's. From the early days, where the chaplains held the same power as a warden within their perspective institutions. To today where society has changed a chaplains duties towards a stronger focus on positivism in the criminal justice system.

The State of Maryland's position duties for Chaplain in 2020 are stated below:

1. This position is open for all religious faiths to apply.
2. The candidate must provide duties in an impartial manner to support all religions represented within the prison's population.
3. Essential duties of this position include: Plans, develops, monitors, and maintains equity of various religious activities/services to include worship activities, study groups, administration of sacraments, holy day observances and special programs in order to enable the incarcerated population to practice their particular chosen religion by responding to inmate requests in accordance with agency policies.
4. Available to inmate population to give advice guidance, support, and to fulfill religious needs by responding to requests slips, circulating in housing units, establishing a visitation schedule for medical and segregation units, and follows-up on inmates' religious related correspondences.

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5. Provides emergency notifications through making contact with inmates and their families in order to provide information and counsel relative to serious illnesses, injuries or death as established in agency directives.

6. Other duties assigned to this position.

I would like to focus on number six in the list of duties, "Other duties assigned to this position".

Last year you will heard from 16 present day chaplains their role in our modern day correctional facility. The staffing shortage we are experiencing and the projections of a few inmate population have changed the chaplains role from spiritual to performing the same tasks as other correctional officers in (CORS) the Correctional Officers' Retirement System.

In your committee testimony are the job specs for chaplains from the State of Maryland. **The class code for chaplains in 005188. This class it is specific to correctional facilities.**

I encourage a favorable vote for this simple ask to add Chaplains to the membership. They are performing correctional officer duties and should be part of the same retirement system.

Thank you,

Delegate Mike McKay

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