



HB 819
Health and Wellness Standards – Correctional Facilities and Health 3 Care Facilities

MCAA Position: **Oppose**

TO: Health and Government Operations
TO: Judiciary Committee

DATE: February 26, 2020

FROM: T.D. Reece, President

The majority of local correctional facilities in the State of Maryland contract with private vendors for inmate food services. Facility managers rely on the vendor and their dieticians to make recommendations regarding inmate nutrition and menu design. Local jails must also maintain compliance with the standards set forth by the Maryland Commission on Correctional Standards and are subject to audit every three years.

All local correctional facilities in Maryland currently offer a vegetarian menu option which meets the needs of those inmates who prefer a “plant based” diet instead of an “animal based” one.

Though HB 819 seems to have good intentions in helping inmates eat healthier, its requirements are unnecessary and would be inherently problematic and difficult to follow. Furthermore, the bill’s requirements are extraordinarily burdensome and potentially very costly.

The managing officials of local correctional facilities work diligently to ensure they are meeting the nutritional needs of those confined in accordance with National and State standards. Between the current food services provided and a wide range of commissary items available to inmates, healthy options are available.

The MCAA strongly opposes this bill. We ask this committee for an unfavorable report on HB 819.