



Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association

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Boston, Massachusetts 02108



February 5, 2024

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Representative Carlos Gonzalez, Co-Chair
Senator Walter F. Timilty, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security
(Sent VIA Email Only)

Re: SB1604- An Act Relative to the Health of Correctional Officers.

Dear Chair Gonzalez and Chair Timilty,

On behalf of the Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association (MSA) and the fourteen duly elected Sheriffs of the Commonwealth, I write in my capacity as Executive Director to ask the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security to provide unanimous support of Senate Bill (SB) 1604- *An Act Relative to the Health of Correctional Officers*, sponsored by Senator John Velis.

The Sheriffs are proud to provide unanimous support for this and other legislation that supports the mental health and well-being of our correctional officers. This bill is a crucial step in recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by those who work in corrections. The provision in the bill that presumes a condition of impairment of health caused by PTSD to be suffered in the line of duty, provided the employee successfully passed a physical examination without evidence of such a condition, demonstrates a thoughtful approach to the mental health concerns faced by correctional facility employees. It acknowledges the potential impact of the challenging work environment on their mental health and ensure fair treatment in cases of disability of death resulting from PTSD. By providing a legal framework that recognizes the unique nature of the challenges faced by correctional facility employees, we can contribute to a more supportive and just system.

We respectfully request **the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security to report out favorably on this legislation.** Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you require additional information or have any questions.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

Carrie Hill
Executive Director