



House Bill 203

Labor and Employment - Training Repayment Agreements - Prohibition

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

Date: February 5, 2026

From: Karrington Anderson & Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 203. This bill would broadly prohibit employers, including county governments, from entering into training repayment agreements with employees. HB 203 would render any such existing agreements null and void. While intended to protect workers, the bill would have significant and presumably unintended consequences for county governments and their ability to responsibly invest in workforce development.

Many counties rely on training repayment agreements as a limited and targeted tool to protect substantial public investments in employees who receive costly, specialized training as a condition of employment. Counties routinely fund pre-employment screenings, academy training, certifications, and licensing for critical public safety and public works positions, including correctional officers, deputy sheriffs, 9-1-1 dispatchers, and road workers.

For example, some county law enforcement academies alone cost more than \$3,000 per employee, and counties have experienced employees leaving within weeks of completing training. **Repayment agreements help ensure basic retention during probationary periods and safeguard taxpayer dollars by preventing employees from voluntarily departing shortly after receiving significant publicly funded training.** The bill also exposes counties to significant financial and legal risk by authorizing civil actions, treble damages, and steep administrative penalties of up to \$20,000 for subsequent violations.

Counties need practical tools to recruit, train, and retain a skilled workforce while remaining accountable to taxpayers. HB 203 removes an important tool without offering a workable alternative, ultimately almost certainly resulting in an unwanted outcome -- reduced training opportunities for needed employees across local government.

For these reasons, MACo urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report for HB 203.