

JHEANELLE WILKINS
Legislative District 20
Montgomery County

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Ways and Means Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 350
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3493 · 301-858-3493
800-492-7122 Ext. 3493
Fax 410-841-3445 · 301-858-3445
Jheanelle.Wilkins@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 6, 2020

**House Bill 1414 Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Standards at State
Correctional Facilities**

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present House Bill 1414 Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Standards at State Correctional Facilities, which would establish standards for State correctional facilities to submit annual reports and adhere to standards regarding compensation for labor performed by incarcerated individuals, commissary rates, telecommunication service rates, training opportunities, and reentry partnerships.

In the 2019 Legislative Session, the Maryland General Assembly voted to require the Commissioner of Correction and Division of Correction annual reports to include more detailed information on the employment and wages of the thousands of incarcerated individuals working inside State correctional facilities. As a result of this report, we know that jobs offered range from preparing meals to making the furniture, flags, and license plates that we use for the General Assembly, and daily pay ranges from only 90 cents a day to \$2.75 a day, depending on skill level.

HB 1414 creates standards that State correctional facilities must follow, including the standard that all incarcerated individuals must be compensated for labor performed, regardless of the type, frequency, or duration of the task, and any job placement must reflect the diversity of the institution. HB 1414 would also ensure training opportunities inside prisons reflect the state's job market, and that commissary items and telecommunication services are priced fairly and at a reasonable market rate.

Without clear standards in place, incarcerated individuals continue to be paid low wages compared to the price of commissary and making calls. It's critical that we improve the work opportunities available in prisons, and ensure all incarcerated individuals have a fair chance at receiving job training and fair wages that will help prepare them for the job market once they are released. For these reasons, I urge the committee to give a **favorable** report for **House Bill 1414**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jheanelle Wilkins".

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins