



SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY

February 10, 2021

Submitted by

**Dr. Bernard Sadusky, Executive Director
Maryland Association of Community Colleges**

SB 397 – Correctional Services – Diminution Credits - Education

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges ("MACC") representing Maryland's 16 community colleges supports this legislation that would encourage and provide incentives for inmates to further their education. Increased education will assist incarcerated individuals to find meaningful employment upon their release.

Recent changes to Pell Grant funding have expanded access to postsecondary education opportunities for incarcerated persons. Accompanying this benefit is a responsibility that will require inmates to become informed consumers regarding the array of postsecondary opportunities. To assist in preventing costly mistakes, MACC suggests an amendment that would require program offerings meet a cost-efficiency standard, assure high quality and will transfer.

MACC requests two amendments to this legislation. The first would require that the post-secondary education and training programs provided under this legislation be approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission ("MHEC") to ensure that the participating inmates benefit from a clear pathway to either degree completion, licensure, or credentialing. Without the requirement of MHEC approval, the scarce funding resources for continued education may be wasted on programs which do not provide the increased opportunity offered by this legislation.

The second amendment would be a requirement the inmates receive fiduciary assistance prior to entering into any postsecondary agreements in order to understand the limits of financial aid assistance and to select cost-efficient programs of study.