



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of the Secretary Office of Legislative Affairs

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STATE OF MARYLAND

BILL: SENATE BILL 397

LAWRENCE J. HOGAN, JR.
GOVERNOR

POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
LT. GOVERNOR

EXPLANATION: This bill allows for a deduction of 90 days in advance from the inmate's term of confinement - per program completed - if the inmate successfully obtains an intermediate high academic certificate, a technical or vocational training program certificate, a state high school diploma, an associate degree or a bachelor's degree.

ROBERT L. GREEN
SECRETARY

RACHEL SESSA
CHIEF OF STAFF

COMMENTS:

WAYNE HILL
ACTING DEPUTY
SECRETARY
OPERATIONS

- The Department's Division of Correction (DOC) operates approximately 17 State correctional facilities which house offenders sentenced to incarceration for 18 months and longer. The Department also runs the Baltimore City Pretrial Complex, under the Division of Pretrial Detention and Services (DPDS), which houses pretrial detainees and inmates sentenced to incarceration for 18 months and less.
- The Department of Labor provides correctional educational opportunities to inmates through programs offered at each State correctional institution, the Patuxent Institution, and all pre-release units. The mission is to provide incarcerated individuals with high quality services that facilitate successful transition into Maryland's workforce and communities.
- Education has been linked to lower recidivism rates. A 2013 report from Rand Corporation determined "inmates that participate in academic and occupational training programs are 43 percent less likely to return to prison."¹
- In addition, research from the United States Department of Justice cites that prison education has profound and often-life changing benefits. It notes that there is a substantial reduction in violence, and disciplinary infractions in the correctional institutions.

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CATHERINE KAHL
ACTING DIRECTOR

¹ RAND Corporation. (2013, August 22). *Education and Vocational Training in Prisons Reduces Recidivism, Improves Job Outlook*. Retrieved from: <http://www.rand.org/news/press/2013/08/22.html>

- The Second Chance Pell Program supports postsecondary education programs for individuals in prison and affords inmates the opportunity to receive higher education certificates and degrees. Four of Maryland's higher education institutions were awarded the Second Chance Pell Grant: Goucher College; Anne Arundel Community College; Wor-Wic Community College; and the University of Baltimore. With the recent expansion of the Second Chance Pell Program, the DOC is growing partnerships with more colleges throughout the State, including the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Bowie State University.
- In December 2020, Congress passed a COVID-19 relief bill that included Pell restoration funding. With the recent expansion of the Second Chance Pell Program, the DOC is growing partnerships with more colleges throughout the State, including University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Bowie State University.
- More importantly, correctional education provides inmates returning to the community increased knowledge and skills and will assist the offender with maintaining sustainability in the community, thus lowering recidivism rates.
- The Department would like to point out one major issue with the bill. Specifically, the bill calls for a deduction "in advance" from the term of confinement. Applying diminution credits in advance is not possible as successful completion of the program is a requirement under the bill. If SB 397 passes in its current form without an amendment, there will likely be legal issues down the road.

CONCLUSION: The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as it deliberates on Senate Bill 397.

REVERSE