

CANDACE MCLAREN LANHAM
Chief Deputy Attorney General



CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA
Chief Operating Officer

CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI
Deputy Attorney General

ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY
Chief, Equity, Policy, and Engagement

LEONARD HOWIE
Deputy Attorney General

PETER V. BERNS
General Counsel

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

FACSIMILE NO.
(410) 576-7036

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NO
(410) 576-6592

January 23, 2024

TO: The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee

FROM: Tiffany Johnson Clark
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 92 – Resources and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act -
Favorable

The Office of Attorney General urges a favorable report on House Bill 92 sponsored by Delegate Marlon Amprey. This bill requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to assist individuals in its custody in accessing federal Pell grants for higher education.

A Pell grant is a federal grant given to individuals who display exceptional financial need to attend a postsecondary institution of higher education. Under most situations, a Pell grant does not need to be repaid. The Pell grant is available to all qualified incarcerated individuals to further pursue post-secondary education, however, the majority of incarcerated individuals in correctional institutions in the State are unaware of what Pell grants are and how they can be beneficial to them both while incarcerated and in their communities.

House Bill 92 further requires the Maryland Department of Labor (DOL) to set goals for the number of inmates in education programs and to establish tracking systems relating to the number of inmates and their progress in education programs. Finally, House Bill 92 requires the

Maryland Higher Education Commission and the Department of Humans Services to assist DOL in establishing progress tracking systems. Providing individuals incarcerated in our correctional system with an education is one of the best ways to ensure individuals returning from prison successfully reenter their communities and avoid recidivism. The return on this educational investment not only benefits the formerly incarcerated, but also taxpayers who would otherwise have to support the incarceration of recidivists.

House Bill 92 brings together the necessary government agencies to provide educational wrap-around services and supports for incarcerated individuals and individuals reentering their communities after a term of incarceration. For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable report on House Bill 92.

cc: Delegate Marlon Amprey