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Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0536 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Correctional Services Apprenticeship Start-Up Grant Program – Establishment

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0536, Correctional Services Apprenticeship Start-Up Grant Program – Establishment

This bill is an attempt to create a training program and a hiring path for those being trained to assist in solving a critical shortage of correctional officers in Maryland. As reported by Maryland Matters and AFSCME there were more than 3,400 less than the required and necessary staffing needs in Maryland for these occupations. ¹

This bill will create a cooperative effort between sponsors, employers, and apprentices participating in a correctional services apprenticeship program to work on solutions that will increase the pool of available trained correctional officers. It will assist in the establishment of a cohort of individuals qualified to work in correctional services, and will encourage correctional facilities to hire interns as part of the training to help fulfill these needed employees.

This bill is a win-win both for job seekers, people wishing to change careers, and the correctional institutions that will benefit from increased staffing availability. It can and will create justice equity that interrupts a prison pipeline by placing people on the outside of the bars working to be the example of how to become a contributing member of society.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0536.

¹ <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2023/04/20/afscme-report-staffing-shortage-by-more-than-3400-at-marylands-correctional-facilities/#:~:text=A%20new%20report%20released%20Thursday%20by%20Maryland%E2%80%99s%20largest,an%20extreme%20staffing%20shortage%20of%20more%20than%203%2C400.>