



**The Maryland Office of the Correctional Ombudsman**  
**300 West Preston Street #213**  
**Baltimore, Maryland 21201**

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**TO:** Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair and Members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee

**FROM:** Yvonne Briley-Wilson, Esquire, Maryland Correctional Ombudsman  
The Maryland Office of the Correctional Ombudsman

**DATE:** February 3, 2026

**REGARDING:** **SUPPORT** – HB194 - Incarcerated Job Training Act

Good afternoon, Chair Wells, Vice-Chair Kerr and committee members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB194.

I am Yvonne Briley-Wilson, Esquire, the Maryland Correctional Ombudsman. I am here this afternoon testifying on behalf of the Maryland Office of the Correctional Ombudsman (OCO) in support of HB194 - Incarcerated Job Training. As the agency that provides oversight to the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), it is the mission of the Office of the Correctional Ombudsman to function in transparency, accountability, and impartiality, ensuring that incarcerated adults and detained and/or adjudicated youth are treated fairly, with dignity, humanity and respect. OCO emphasizes the importance of collaboration among the agencies we oversee, the individuals in their care, and the staff working within them. We also value the strength of our community partnerships and prioritize the reduction of recidivism and the safety of all Marylanders.

OCO supports HB194 because it aligns with the mission of OCO and supports the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals back into the community. Rehabilitation and preparation to re-enter the community should and does start from the point incarcerated individuals enter the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). HB194 seeks to ensure Incarcerated individuals (IIs) are prepared to reenter society with proper training and professional skills.

Over the last year and a half, OCO has consistently received inquiries/complaints from incarcerated individuals in every facility we have entered about not being prepared to re-enter the community with appropriate job training skills. Individuals who do not have the proper job

training skills will have a more difficult time obtaining employment, and reassimilating into society which will reduce the likelihood of their recidivism.

This bill not only considers the II, but it also considers the families of IIs by directly allowing DPSCS to provide the families with financial support as a result of the IIs hard work. If passed, this bill will create in IIs selected to participate in the apprenticeships a sense of accomplishment. IIs armed with proper job training and a means for providing a livable wage for their families will be less likely to return to the system. It will provide motivation and booster confidence for IIs to remain focused on real career opportunities upon their release.

OCO urges your support of HB194 to ensure that incarcerated individuals have the opportunity to participate in an apprenticeship program that supports them and potentially aids their families while creating hopefully sustainable opportunities once they exit from behind the walls.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Office of the Correctional Ombudsman's support of HB194. I welcome any questions you may have at this time.