

Bill Number: HB 194
Scott D. Shellenberger, State's Attorney for Baltimore County
Support

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SCOTT D. SHELLENBERGER,
STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY,
IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 194
INCARCERATED JOB TRAINING

I write in support of HB194 that will require the Department of Public Safety to establish programs so that incarcerated inmates will learn job skills while incarcerated.

HB 194 establishes a program within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services that would coordinate apprenticeship programs for incarcerated persons. While the bill directly provides for incarcerated persons to work as apprentices during their sentence, the true effect of the bill is to allow these persons to gain skills that will increase their employability once they are released. Reentry services like this are an investment in public safety – research has demonstrated that individuals returning to their communities from incarceration are less likely to reoffend when they are afforded meaningful opportunities. Meaning the ability to get a well paying job.

By connecting incarcerated persons with employers during their sentence and providing them with an opportunity to learn key skills and obtain work experience, this bill will help returning citizens overcome one of the significant barriers they often face upon their release from incarceration: finding employment.

By breaking the cycle of recidivism, reentry programs like the one created in HB 194 directly contribute to public safety by preventing crime. Any costs associated with this program, and with reentry programs generally, are justified. These programs pay for themselves when returning citizens are able to successfully reintegrate into society.

I urge a favorable report.