



Division of Research and Economic Development

February 26, 2020

Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair
House Health and Government Operations
Committee, Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East - Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: FAVORABLE – HB-1524/SB -858 – Procurement and Correctional Facilities - Employment Opportunities for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committees:

As the Assistant Vice President of Research and Innovation and Advocacy for Morgan State University (“Morgan”), it is a great honor and privilege to offer this letter of support of HB-1524/SB-858 the “Employment Opportunities for Formerly Incarcerated.” Morgan State University is the premier public urban research university in Maryland, known for its excellence in teaching, intensive research, effective public service and community engagement. Morgan prepares diverse and competitive graduates for success in a global, interdependent society. As one of the leading higher education institutions in Maryland, Morgan is proud to announce its commitment to helping Returned Citizens in obtaining higher paying jobs by offering correctional education through Morgan’s participation in the Second Chance Pell Grant.

In a ground breaking study that evaluated the effectiveness of correctional education, it was reported that Returned Citizens who have participated in a GED program have a **30% rate** of recidivism, while those who participated in a post-secondary program have a **17% rate** of recidivism¹ and those who have received a bachelor’s degree while in prison have a **4.5%** rate of recidivism.² That same study also revealed that Returned Citizens who received a prison education were 13% more likely to be employed upon release. Consequently, increasing the educational

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1. Davis, L. M., Bozick, R., Steele, J. L., Saunders, J., & Miles, J. N. V. (2013). Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education: A meta-analysis of programs that provide education to incarcerated adults. Washington, DC: The RAND Corporation.
 2. Nally, J. M., Lockwood, d., Ho, T., & Knutson, K. (2014). Post-release recidivism and employment among different types of released offenders: A 5-year follow-up study in the United States. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 9(1), 16-34.

Division of Research and Economic Development
Montebello Building, Suite 302
1700 E. Cold Spring Lane, Baltimore, MD, USA, 21251
Phone: 443.885.3447 Fax: 443.885.8280



proficiency of inmates during incarceration improves their chances of finding and keeping gainful employment upon release.³

It was projected that by 2020 that 35% percent of the job openings in the US will require at least a bachelor's degree, 30 percent of the job openings will require some college or an associate's degree and 36 percent of the job openings will not require education beyond high school.⁴ Therefore, educational attainment is a key determinate for employment, particularly for Returned Citizens.

In the summer of 2019, Morgan, along our three other Maryland HBCUs, participated in the Second Chance Pell Grant informational program hosted by Attorney Jo Saint-George. As a result of that program, Morgan has completed its application to provide correctional education in Maryland prisons through the U.S. Department of Education Second Chance Pell Grant program. The Pell Grant program pays the full tuition for inmates who desire to complete a degree while incarcerated.

Upon completion of its MOU with the U.S. Department of Education, Morgan anticipates offering in Maryland correctional facilities work ready business/entrepreneur certifications, bachelor's degrees in business, communication and health sciences. In particular, through our School of Nutrition, Morgan is planning to offer a work ready certificate in Plant-Based Culinary Medicine to meet the growing demand in the market for plant-based chefs and healthcare workers.

While education is the key to obtaining a job, there must be jobs for Returned Citizen to obtain. Therefore, HB-1524 is needed so that Returned Citizens who do earn a degree will have jobs opportunities where they can use their new skill sets. While Morgan prepares Returned Citizens for the workforce, HB-1524 provides the job opportunities that will increase their chances of actual employment.

Consequently, Morgan State University fully supports the objectives of SB-768/HB-819 and plans to become a partner with the prisons, the Maryland Department of Health, Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities and the hospitals to effectively reduce recidivism through prison education.

3. Winterfield, L., Coggeshall, M., Burke-Storer, M., Correa, V., & Simon, T. (2009). The effects of postsecondary correctional education: Final report. Urban Institute: Justice Policy Center, <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED508247.pdf>

⁴ See *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018*. - <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/recovery-job-growth-and-education-requirements-through-2020/>



HB-1524 will allow Morgan to grow its mission field with the most vulnerable and who students who are behind bars. Your passage of HB-1524.

Should your committee need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at Timothy.Akers@Morgan.Edu, 443.885.3798 (office), or 706.255.3963 (cell).

Sincerely,

Timothy A. Akers, M.S., Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President for Research Innovation and Advocacy
Professor of Public Health
Division of Research and Economic Development
Morgan State University

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1. Carson, E. A. (2014). Prisoners in 2013. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.
 2. Davis, L. M., Bozick, R., Steele, J. L., Saunders, J., & Miles, J. N. V. (2013). Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education: A meta-analysis of programs that provide education to incarcerated adults. Washington, DC: The RAND Corporation.
 3. Erisman, W. & Contardo, J. B. (2005). Learning to reduce recidivism: A 50-state analysis of postsecondary education policy. Washington, DC: The Institute for Higher Education Policy.
 4. Fallin, M. (2015) State of the state address, February 3, 2015, http://www.ok.gov/governor/State_of_the_State_Address.html
 5. Nally, J. M., Lockwood, d., Ho, T., & Knutson, K. (2014). Post-release recidivism and employment among different types of released offenders: A 5-year follow-up study in the United States. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 9(1), 16-34.
 6. Winterfield, L., Coggeshall, M., Burke-Storer, M., Correa, V., & Simon, T. (2009). The effects of postsecondary correctional education: Final report. Urban Institute: Justice Policy Center, <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED508247.pdf>