



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Shared Voices for Liberal Religious Values in Maryland

c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044, ex. 111
www.uulmmd.org info@uulmmd.org www.facebook.com/uulmmd www.twitter.com/uulmmd

VOTE FOR SB 922

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Criminal Procedure -Correctional Services - Diminution Credits – Education

Mar. 5, 2020

Good Afternoon Chairman Smith, Vice-Chair Sen.Waldstreicher and Committee Members:

I am Karen Clark - Task Force chair of the Criminal Justice Issues for the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry, a faith-based statewide advocacy group for Social Justice. The UU Legislative Ministry intentionally selects and directs **their energy into bills that align with their denominational principles**. This bill connects with our first principle – We affirm the inherent worth and dignity of all people. This bill aims to better prepare our returning citizens for a successful assimilation back into their communities. We all want safe and healthy communities. When our returning citizens are better prepared to be successful we all benefit.

There is solid evidence-based research that returning citizens who have participated in educational programs and worked to develop technical skills, have a significantly better chance of not recidivating (43% less chance) and a greater chance of securing a job than those who do not engage in such programs. (*Rand Corp. 2015;Case for Correctional Ed. in US prisons*) The Abell Foundation also evaluated Maryland's correctional system and released its report in 2017 making four suggestions for improvement. One of them is the subject of this bill SB 922. The bill offers milestone diminution credits for the completion of significant educational work like earning your GED, getting an associate degree or completing a vocational training program.. The larger block of diminution credits motivates those behind the walls to make the hard work worthwhile and develops good study habits by following through after getting started on a goal.

The Unitarian Universalists Legislative Ministry asks you to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of this behind the walls by supporting SB 922.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Clark

UULM –MD Criminal Justice Task Force Chair