

Clark_fav_sb9222

Uploaded by: Clark, Karen

Position: FAV



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
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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

jotf_fAV_sb922

Uploaded by: FRAZIER, DERRELL

Position: FAV

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 922:

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES – DIMINUTION CREDITS – EDUCATION

TO: Chairman. William C. Smith, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Derrell Frazier, Policy Advocate

DATE: March 5, 2020

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-skill, low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. We support Senate Bill 922 as a means of increasing the employability of job seekers with criminal records.

The educational and training systems operating within most correctional institutions are a key component of inmate rehabilitation. Maryland's mandatory education law requires inmates to enroll in educational or workforce skills classes: 1) If the individual does not have a high school diploma; 2) If the individual has at least 18 months remaining on their sentence, and; 3) Is not exempt due to medical, developmental, or learning disabilities. Inmates must participate for a minimum of 120 days, but many never complete the program.

Currently, inmates, except for those serving a sentence for a crime of violence, sexual offenses, or kingpin drug offenses, can earn up to thirty (30) diminution credits per month for being enrolled in an educational program but there is no incentive for making progress or obtaining a GED.

In order to encourage inmates to complete their academic or vocational programming, and reward those who are steadfast in their commitment to higher education or learning a skill, Senate Bill 922 would establish a 90-day diminution credit bonus to be awarded to those who earn their GED or high school diploma, complete a literacy skills program, post-secondary certificate or degree, or two-year or four-year college degree.

Education, specifically obtaining one's GED behind bars, is associated with higher rates of employment after release. Studies have shown that inmates who have a GED when released from prison recidivate at a rate that is 7.9% less than inmates overall, meaning fewer victims and more productive members of the community. Encouraging inmates to not only participate, but complete an educational program is a matter of public safety – replacing criminal behavior with an educational foundation to build confidence and secure legitimate job skill

Many other states have recognized the benefits associated with educational attainment behind the fence. According to the Secretary of the Florida Department of Corrections, the increase in inmates earning a GED or vocational certificate behind bars appears to be a factor in Florida's decreased recidivism rates. By passing this legislation, Maryland will join 13 other states in offering diminution credit bonuses for educational achievement. Therefore, we respectfully urge a **favorable** report of House Bill 812.

GBC_FAV_SB922

Uploaded by: Fry, Donald

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE**SENATE BILL 922 -- CORRECTIONAL SERVICES – DIMINUTION CREDITS - EDUCATION****March 5, 2020****DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE****POSITION: Support**

Senate Bill 922 authorizes a one-time diminution credit of 90 days to reduce the term of confinement of an inmate who successfully obtains a certificate of completion for a technical or vocational training program, a state high school diploma by examination, a high school diploma, an associate degree or a bachelor's degree. Senate Bill 922 also excludes individuals who are serving a sentence for certain sexual offenses from eligibility.

One of the best ways to ensure that someone is successful upon release from incarceration is to provide education and skills training during incarceration, or "inside the fence". Program analysis performed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy indicate strong positive outcomes for individuals who participate in correctional education and vocational training programs. Their benefit-cost analyses show a return on investment of almost \$10 for every \$1 spent on basic correctional education with a jump to \$19 for every \$1 spent in post-secondary correctional education. Many programs currently exist in Maryland, including job training through Maryland Correctional Enterprises, educational programming through the Goucher Prison Education Partnership, and other programs run by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. However, incarcerated individuals do not always take advantage of the programs available to them.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is committed to supporting policy proposals that have the potential to increase public safety and help returning citizens avoid recidivism. To address this important issue, the GBC created the Coalition for a Second Chance, a group of experts from the public and private sectors charged with examining barriers to employment for those returning to society from a period of incarceration, as well as other policy issues tied to reentry to these individuals. In December 2016, the Coalition for a Second Chance published a report, *Opening Doors to a Second Chance*, focused on improving job prospects for returning citizens and ensuring their success after leaving incarceration. The report concluded that education attainment is a major barrier for workers with a criminal record seeking jobs.

Senate Bill 922 seeks to incentivize incarcerated individuals to take advantage of the educational programming offered to them by granting one-time diminution credits if the inmate successfully obtains either a certificate of completion from a technical or vocational training program, a high school diploma or diploma by examination, an associate's degree, or a bachelor's degree. If successful, this incentive could have a meaningful impact on improving inmates' ability to enter the workforce upon release.

Additionally, Senate Bill 922 is consistent with the GBC's 2020 Legislative Priorities which call on policymakers to adopt a coordinated approach that reduces violent crime while simultaneously addressing the root causes of crime, such as poverty, joblessness, and lack of education or workforce

training. The priorities specifically call for increased efforts to implement programs that provide access to rehabilitative treatment, education, and workforce training.

For the reasons stated above, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report of Senate Bill 922.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 65-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

MAJR_FAV_SB922

Uploaded by: Greco, Vince

Position: FAV

SUPPORT SB 922 and SB 971 - correctional education milestones

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary and unnecessary incarceration and to improve the lives of those who are incarcerated



To: Chair Will Smith and Senate Judicial Proceedings Com.
From: Phil Caroom and Bob Rhudy
MAJR Executive Com.
Date: March 5, 2020

Md. Alliance for Justice Reform ([MAJR-www.ma4jr.org](http://www.ma4jr.org)) strongly supports SB 922 and SB 971 to restore an incentive —90 days credit — for Maryland prison inmates who achieve the most effective rehabilitation available to them while incarcerated – that is, meaningful education (GEDs, AAs, college degrees) and valuable vocational certificates.

As between the two bills, MAJR supports the option that SB 971 offers because it doesn't statutorily add to penalties for sex offenders: Education and employment both have been proven to have a good effect in reducing recidivism for sex offenders, just as they are for other types of offenders. (For example, see http://www.cjcj.org/uploads/cjcj/documents/The_Post-Release.pdf Generally, research suggests that the highest % of sex offenders aren't the greatest recidivism threats: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-watch/wp/2017/03/09/the-big-lie-about-sex-offenders/>).

Sex offenders, with registration & other restrictions, already face horrible barriers to finding employment and housing on release. Reducing their incentive to improve their education / vocational training would only make things worse for them -- and, thus, increase their recidivism risks.

As to prison inmates generally, education has been shown to reduce recidivism rates by 40 to 50 percent, studies show. See, e.g., [2013 Rand Corporation report](#). Regular employment, enabled by marketable vocational certificates, also has similar proven value in reducing recidivism.

But, in recent years, Maryland law diluted “diminution credits” with equal time off sentences for any “assigned tasks” (which could be sweeping the floor) regardless of their potentially minimal value towards rehabilitation. See Correctional Service Article, sec. 3- 703 and 3-704.

The result: Inmates flock to these easier opportunities and waiting lists for education disappeared. Annual GEDs earned in prison has dropped from nearly 1,000 to between 300 and 400 with our prison population of about 18,000 inmates. Now, only about 15 percent of all inmates are reported to participate in educational programs, according to a recent DPSCS report. Current participation in the valuable Md. Correctional Enterprises has dropped below 10 percent.

SB 922 and SB 971 would help to reverse this downward trend in Maryland inmates' correctional education and, according to its 2019 fiscal impact comment, at no extra cost to DPSCS. (See next page.) Please give a favorable report to SB 922 and SB 971.

Please note: Phil Caroom provides this testimony for MAJR and not for the Md. Judiciary.

Senate Bill 621 Judicial Proceedings
Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly 2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE Third Reader - Revised (Senator Carter, et al.)
Correctional Services - Diminution Credits - Education

SB 621
Judiciary

This bill authorizes diminution credits to reduce the term of confinement of an inmate who successfully obtains (1) an intermediate high academic certificate; (2) no more than one certificate of completion of a technical or vocational training program, as specified; (3) a State High School Diploma by Examination; (4) a high school diploma; (5) an associate degree; or (6) a bachelor's degree.

For inmates serving a sentence for a crime of violence, specified sexual offenses, or specified volume or kingpin drug offenses, the maximum possible deduction for diminution credits is 20 days per program completed; for all other inmates, the maximum is 30 days per program completed.

The diminution credits allowed are in addition to any other deductions allowed, and the Commissioner of Correction must establish a uniform system of deductions and participation criteria allowed for the diminution credit. The bill applies prospectively and may not be applied or interpreted to have any effect on or application to any award of diminution credit before the bill's October 1, 2019 effective date.

FISCAL SUMMARY

State Effect: Minimal decrease in incarceration expenditures for the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS); Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

MAP_fav_sb922

Uploaded by: jefferson, stacey

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 922

Correctional Services – Diminution Credits - Education

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 5, 2020

Submitted by Stacey Jefferson and Margo Quinlan, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

Advocates for Children and Youth
Baltimore Jewish Council
Behavioral Health System Baltimore
CASH Campaign of Maryland
Catholic Charities
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Family League of Baltimore
Fuel Fund of Maryland
Health Care for the Homeless
Homeless Persons
Representation Project
Job Opportunities Task Force
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Loyola University Maryland
Maryland Catholic Conference
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Maryland Community Action
Partnership
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Paul's Place
Public Justice Center
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore
Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

Stacey Jefferson, Co-Chair
P: 410-637-1900 ext 8578
C: 443-813-9231

E: stacey.jefferson@bhsbaltimore.org

Margo Quinlan, Co-Chair
C: 410-236-5488

E: mquinlan@familyleague.org

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports SB 922, which encourages individuals who are incarcerated to seek educational advancement by providing a one-time diminution credit to those who successfully obtain a certificate of completion of a technical or vocational training program, a GED, a high school diploma, an associate degree, or a bachelor's degree while they are behind the wall.

Access to educational programming while incarcerated needs to be encouraged and supported. Currently, Maryland's mandatory education law requires inmates who do not have a diploma, and are serving 18 months or more, to attend educational classes; however, it does not encourage or reward individuals for completing the GED curriculum. Diminution credits are only provided for attending vocational and education courses, but not for completing programs. As a result, many educational programs behind the wall have waiting lists as there is no incentive for completing the programs once someone is enrolled. Providing diminution credits for completing an educational program would create a faster rotation of open slots for new students.

Expanding diminution credits for advancement in education is sound public safety policy, as access to educational programming is critical for successful reentry into the community. Studies show that individuals who have a GED and advanced educational opportunities are less likely to recidivate than individuals who are returning to the community without advanced education. Additionally, individuals who have obtained a certificate of higher education while incarcerated have a greater likelihood of locating employment and economic security upon release.

Encouraging educational advancement through diminution credits is cost-effective. During a tight budget climate, breaking the costly cycle of recidivism is critical. SB 922 will encourage individuals who are incarcerated to complete educational programs, which will increase their ability to thrive in their communities upon release from incarceration.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges your support of SB 922.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.

Keller_FAV_SUP SB 971 & 922

Uploaded by: Keller, Brad

Position: FAV

SUPPORT SB 971 & SB 922

The Honorable Senator Will Smith
Chair of Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Smith and Committee Members:

I would like to ask for your support for SB 971 & SB 922. This legislation would allow the Maryland Division of Corrections to establish a reward for inmates that successfully complete educational assignment's such as earning a GED or successfully completing occupational training.

During my 25 ½ years as a correctional principal, I learned that the inmate population is largely illiterate and not prepared to re-enter society and be successful with gaining employment. The average inmate waiting to enter my school read around the 5th grade level. Most inmates have failed school for one reason or another. Many have bad memories about their school failures. We can force some inmates to attend school and others we cannot force to enter school. This bill would encourage more inmates to enter and successfully complete school.

We know from numerous studies that inmates who are successful with educational programs in prison are less likely to return. This benefits the individual, their families, our society and reduces state expenditures through a reduction in recidivism.

I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brad H. Keller
18929 Maple Valley Circle
Hagerstown, MD 21742
b.keller@myactv.net
240-675-7755

Mitchell_FAV_SUP SB 971 & 922

Uploaded by: Mitchell, Molly

Position: FAV

SUPPORT SB 971 and 922 -
CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION MILESTONES



March 5, 2020

To: The Honorable Luke Clippinger and Distinguished Members of the Maryland General Assembly
House Judiciary Committee

From: Quaker Voice of Maryland (QVM), Molly Mitchell, Clerk

Quaker Voice of Maryland, formed in 2019, helps Maryland Quakers have an effective voice in statewide policy decisions on issues of concern to them. Quaker Voice of MD supports SB 971 and SB 922.

State prison recidivism statistics indicate that over 40% of those who leave MD prisons return (recidivate) within 3 years. To help people who have served time in our state prisons live stable, productive lives when they re-enter our communities, providing education while they are in custody is critical.

As noted in a recent Rand Corporation study (2016), "Inmates who participate in any kind of educational program behind bars—from remedial math to vocational auto shop to college-level courses—are up to 43 percent less likely to reoffend and return to prison. They also appear to be far more likely to find a job after their release, and the social stability that comes with it." Every dollar invested in correctional education, RAND concluded, saves nearly five in reincarceration costs over three years."

According to its 2019 Fiscal Impact report, the cost to the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to track the increased incentives of SB 971 & 922 would be minimal. However, professionals suggest that the increased incentives could help restore the level of GED participation which substantially has dropped in recent years.

This bill will support public safety by reducing recidivism. For all these reasons, Quaker Voice of Maryland urges the members of the House Judiciary Committee to support SB 971 & SB 922.

Sincerely,

Molly Mitchell, Clerk (Chair)

Quaker Voice of Maryland
quakervoicemd@gmail.com
www.quakervoicemd.org

MD CATHOLIC CONFERENCE_FAV_SB 922

Uploaded by: O'DAY, GARRETT

Position: FAV



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 5, 2020

SB 922

Correctional Services - Diminution Credits – Education

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 922. The Catholic Conference represents the public policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, including the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

Senate Bill 922 would afford inmates to earn diminution credits for successfully reaching each of the following academic milestones: a.) an intermediate high academic certificate, b.) completion of a technical or vocational training program, c.) a high school diploma, d.) an associate degree, and e.) a bachelor's degree.

In its pastoral statement *“Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice”* (USCCB, 2000), the United States conference of Catholic Bishops cited the “absence of educational opportunities” among considerations “contributing to a high rate of recidivism”. The USCCB also cited “education” as one of the key “necessities that enable inmates to live in dignity”.

Additionally, the Conference firmly supports restorative justice practices. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has stated that “People must be held accountable for their actions but justice and restoration must be the object of punishment which must have a constructive and reformatory purpose” (*Restorative Justice: Healing and Transformation of Persons, Families and Communities*, USCCB, 2015).

Senate Bill 922 is a restorative justice measure and the Church maintains that systems of incarceration should always be centered on *restorative* justice. When inmates are incentivized to obtain an education, or further their academic credentials, their chances to break free from their often-challenging circumstances and live productive lives post-release are exponentially enhanced. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 922.

MAJR_FAV_ & 922

Uploaded by: Rhudy, Bob

Position: FAV

SUPPORT SB 922 and SB 971 - correctional education milestones

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary and unreasonable incarceration



To: Chair Will Smith and Senate Judicial Proceedings Com.
From: Phil Caroom and Bob Rhudy
MAJR Executive Com.
Date: March 5, 2020

Md. Alliance for Justice Reform ([MAJR-www.ma4jr.org](http://www.ma4jr.org)) strongly supports SB 922 and SB 971 to restore an incentive —90 days credit — for Maryland prison inmates who achieve the most effective rehabilitation available to them while incarcerated – that is, meaningful education (GEDs, AAs, college degrees) and valuable vocational certificates.

As between the two bills, MAJR supports the option that SB 971 offers because it doesn't statutorily add to penalties for sex offenders: Education and employment both have been proven to have a good effect in reducing recidivism for sex offenders, just as they are for other types of offenders. (For example, see http://www.cjcj.org/uploads/cjcj/documents/The_Post-Release.pdf Generally, research suggests that the highest % of sex offenders aren't the greatest recidivism threats: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-watch/wp/2017/03/09/the-big-lie-about-sex-offenders/>).

Sex offenders, with registration & other restrictions, already face horrible barriers to finding employment and housing on release. Reducing their incentive to improve their education / vocational training would only make things worse for them -- and, thus, increase their recidivism risks.

As to prison inmates generally, education has been shown to reduce recidivism rates by 40 to 50 percent, studies show. See, e.g., [2013 Rand Corporation report](#). Regular employment, enabled by marketable vocational certificates, also has similar proven value in reducing recidivism.

But, in recent years, Maryland law diluted “diminution credits” with equal time off sentences for any “assigned tasks” (which could be sweeping the floor) regardless of their potentially minimal value towards rehabilitation. See Correctional Service Article, sec. 3- 703 and 3-704.

The result: Inmates flock to these easier opportunities and waiting lists for education disappeared. Annual GEDs earned in prison has dropped from nearly 1,000 to between 300 and 400 with our prison population of about 18,000 inmates. Now, only about 15 percent of all inmates are reported to participate in educational programs, according to a recent DPSCS report. Current participation in the valuable Md. Correctional Enterprises has dropped below 10 percent.

SB 922 and SB 971 would help to reverse this downward trend in Maryland inmates' correctional education and, according to its 2019 fiscal impact comment, at no extra cost to DPSCS. (See next page.) Please give a favorable report to SB 922 and SB 971.

Please note: Phil Caroom provides this testimony for MAJR and not for the Md. Judiciary.

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For inmates serving a sentence for a crime of violence, specified sexual offenses, or specified volume or kingpin drug offenses, the maximum possible deduction for diminution credits is 20 days per program completed; for all other inmates, the maximum is 30 days per program completed.

The diminution credits allowed are in addition to any other deductions allowed, and the Commissioner of Correction must establish a uniform system of deductions and participation criteria allowed for the diminution credit. The bill applies prospectively and may not be applied or interpreted to have any effect on or application to any award of diminution credit before the bill's October 1, 2019 effective date.

FISCAL SUMMARY

State Effect: Minimal decrease in incarceration expenditures for the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS); Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Jill Carter_FAV_SB 922

Uploaded by: Senator Carter, Senator Carter

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of SB0922 - Correctional Services – Diminution Credits –
Education
Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee
on March 5, 2020**

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

These bills, SB 922 and its companion bill SB 971, seek to address the problems of mass incarceration and recidivism while reducing the overall cost to the taxpayer of incarceration.

Both of these bills authorize diminution credits to reduce the term of confinement of an inmate who earns certain educational certificates, diplomas, or degrees. SB 922 passed the Senate last session but did not make it out of the House Judiciary Committee. Either of these bills would award an inmate 90 days of diminution for completing specific educational programs.

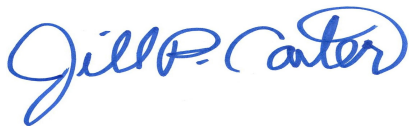
The difference between the bills is who would be entitled to these credits. SB 922 would allow inmates except those serving a sentence for specific sex offenses the full 90 days credit. SB 971 awards 60 days only to prisoners convicted of statutorily defined crimes of violence and sex offenses. All others would be given the full 90 days credit.

Under current law, certain inmates can earn up to 30 diminution credits per month for being enrolled in an educational program. However, there are currently no incentives for completing such a program. These bills would rectify that.

According to DPSCS, Maryland spends an estimated \$3,700 per prisoner monthly. An inmate earning these credits saves the taxpayer \$11,100. A recent Rand Corporation study shows that every one dollar spent on correctional education saves as much as five dollars on incarceration and other costs to the community due to recidivism. As highlighted in the fiscal note, this bill would help reduce the burden on taxpayers while encouraging inmates to seek educational opportunities, and obtain meaningful employment upon release. In addition, passage of this legislation would place Maryland alongside 13 other states that offer diminution credits to inmates for educational achievement.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB0922.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill P. Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill P. Carter

FAIR_FWA_SB922

Uploaded by: Jones, Brenda

Position: FWA



Families Advocating
Intelligent Registries

PO Box 8402 Elkrige, MD 21075 ♥ 800-708-8535 ♥ info@fairregistry.org

SB 922
FWA

Favorable IF AMENDED Response to SB 922 Correctional Services – Diminution Credits – Education

Families Advocating Intelligent Registries (FAIR) has a special concern for persons accused and convicted of sexual offenses, and seeks rational, constitutional sexual offense laws and policies. We are deeply disturbed by SB 922's exclusion of all persons who would be required to register. This is unnecessarily broad.

Diminution credit for educational achievement is an excellent, proven incentive for incarcerated persons. It opens doors once they are released, and provides a strong motivation for good behavior behind prison walls. SB 922 would provide a small deduction in prison time for a number of certifications, diplomas and degrees. As anyone counting the hours until release can tell you, any reduction is a huge incentive.

But there is no justification to exclude persons who would be required to register. Such diminution credits benefit persons who will be on the registry (and society at large) as much as and perhaps more than any other convicted person.

Contrary to common misperceptions,

1. Persons on the registry are far less likely to sexually reoffend (3 – 6%) compared to the re-offense rate of persons with other convictions (roughly 37%);
2. Many persons who are required to register have NOT sexually harmed a child, and a large number have non-contact offenses; and
3. Most registered persons are one-time offenders, NOT repeat or multiple.

Realities

1. Persons with sexual offenses face severe challenges upon their release. They are barred from many housing opportunities, struggle to find even non-child-related employment, and are restricted from participating in their children's lives due to presence restrictions.
2. With society's barriers so much higher, every incentive for sexual offenders to succeed should be provided, including diminution credits for education. Positive encouragement via diminution credits will benefit this population as much as, and probably more than, any other convicted group.

To conclude, FAIR is highly supportive of offering diminution credit for completion of educational goals. FAIR only requests that these credits apply to all persons behind bars, with no exceptions. Please vote NO for SB 922, or **amend it to match SB971**, which

is identical except that it merely reduces good time to 60 days instead of 90 for persons convicted of violent offenses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Brenda V. Jones". The signature is fluid and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Brenda V. Jones, Executive Director
Families Advocating Intelligent Registries

SHELLENBERGER_UNF_SB922

Uploaded by: Shellenberger, Scott

Position: UNF

Bill Number: SB922
Scott D. Shellenberger, State's Attorney for Baltimore County
Opposed

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SCOTT SHELLENBERGER,
STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY, IN
OPPOSITION TO SENATE BILL 922,
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
DIMINUTION CREDITS - EDUCATION

I write in opposition of Senate Bill 922 which expands the application of diminution credits to inmates.

Three years ago the Legislature passed the Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA). The components of that act were agreed to after studying how best to improve our criminal justice system for non-violent offenders.

Part of JRA was to greatly increase diminution credits for non-violent offenders, including credits for education. Senate Bill 922 would expand on credits that were already increased for education. We should not start a new piecemeal approach. What is more Senate Bill 922 gives credits for obtaining a degree on top of the credits you can obtain for taking classes. This appears to be double dipping of credits for the same behavior.

I have no opposition to address this as a credit, but it should be within the existing limits. The diminution credits passed in JRA are sufficient and we should not be raising the caps of credits that should apply.

I urge an unfavorable report of Senate Bill 922.