



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter  
In Favor of SB0971 - 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 971 and its companion bill SB 922, 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 SB0971.**

**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**