

MaryPIRG Students strongly urges representatives in the Maryland General Assembly to vote YES on HB723, which will require the Maryland Higher Education Commission and Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE) to provide easier access to academic and employment opportunities for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. The current system in place poses great barriers for individuals who are in or have gone through the MCE. These barriers make the smooth transition from incarceration to civilian life oftentimes impossible to achieve. This can be seen by the high recidivism rates formerly incarcerated people face.

Those who are currently or formerly incarcerated are people who deserve the right to an easy transition into civilian life after leaving the MCE. They should be provided an avenue to attain a high quality education and job, which this bill supports. Being incarcerated should not be an impediment to one's future. This bill would support a rehabilitative system so that formerly incarcerated individuals have the opportunity to build a more sustainable life for themselves and their families.

Through HB723, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, who were employed by the MCE, will have increased access to academic and employment opportunities. The passing of this bill will allow for these individuals to work towards a smooth transition back to civilian life. For these reasons, MaryPIRG Students urges you to vote yes on this bill.

Sincerely,

*Greeshma Anand, Board Chair of MaryPIRG Students*

*Bailey Arenberg, Vice President of MaryPIRG Students*

*Ayanna Chambers, Secretary and Visibility Chair of MaryPIRG Students*

*Donald Vogel, Recruitment Chair of MaryPIRG Students*