



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE
Office of the President

March 1, 2021

The Honorable Senator Obie Patterson
Twenty-Sixth Legislative District of Maryland (PG County)
The Maryland General Assembly
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street # 201
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Support for Returning Citizen and HBCU Bill (SB800)

Dear Senator Patterson:

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) writes to lend our support for the Returning Citizen and HBCU Bill (SB800) which is scheduled to be presented before Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee on March 9, 2021 and which we are excited to be part of.

Research evidence shows that postsecondary education transforms life, imparts responsibility, increases chance of better gainful employment, improves quality of life, and strengthens family cohesiveness. This is true of mainstream society, and most importantly with incarcerated inmates. As the saying goes, "an idle mind is a devil's workshop", so for the inmates, prison education occupies idle mind, boosts morale, conveys sense of belonging, keeps hope alive for better future upon release and restores some lost dignity thereby enhancing behavior modification toward better and safer prison management.

Up until about 2007, UMES ran a successful inmate undergraduate education program at Eastern Correctional Institution (ECI) and graduated several students who upon release made use of their degree to become gainfully employed. To this end, we see this pilot program as a hopeful venture based on our experience. It will also be an investment in the future of the society at large as it will greatly reduce recidivism in the community. Our previous program died when the funding dried up and the grant was not renewed. We, therefore, cannot be more elated if this similar program is reinstated.

We appreciate your initiative and are totally in support of your efforts towards advocating for this pilot program. The best aspect of the proposal is that it is a virtual program, as such UMES will play its own part to ensure its success if funded. We have the faculty and student manpower

to support it especially with the extra virtual and online experience we have acquired with the COVID-19 total shut down of face-to-face learning in Maryland.

Please count on our Hawk support and we will be glad to help in any way the program requires of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi M. Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Heidi" being the most prominent.

Heidi M. Anderson, PhD, FAPhA
President