

SB 397-Reduce Prison Sentences for Completing DCS

Uploaded by: Beach, Jacqueline

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District 41. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

Having a criminal record reduces the likelihood of getting a job or callback by 50%. This is in part due to the negative social stigma associated with having a record. Additionally, thousands of Marylanders exit state and local correctional facilities and return to our communities without educational or vocational experience to support their successful reentry upon release. The effect is even more pronounced for African Americans who face the implicit and explicit bias of America today. The natural consequence of having no legal means to make a living is the necessity of making a living through alternative means, which are penalized by the criminal justice system. These barriers lead to a cycle of recidivism for individuals with experiences in the criminal legal system.

Incentivizing educational and vocational opportunities to incarcerated Marylanders gives them a better chance of attaining meaningful occupational credentials that can strengthen their resumes and allow them a greater chance of success at finding gainful employment upon reentry, thus reducing the risk of recidivism. This reduces costs associated with incarceration and provides a more skilled workforce for local employers. Most importantly, it improves the lives of our fellow Marylanders.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Beach
2366 Sundew Terrace
Baltimore, MD 21209
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

SUPPORT SB 397 - PC.pdf

Uploaded by: Caroom, Philip

Position: FAV

SUPPORT SB 397 - correctional education milestones

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM
Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



To: Chair Will Smith and Senate Judiciary Committee
From: MAJR Executive Committee
Date: February 10, 2021

Md. Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR-www.ma4jr.org) strongly supports SB 397 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.

MAJR also opposes efforts, as in previous years, that might statutorily add to penalties for prisoners with “crimes of violence” or sex offenses: 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.cjcz.org/uploads/cjcz/documents/The_Post_Release.pdf). Generally, research suggests that the highest % of sex offenders aren't the greatest recidivism threats. (See, e.g., <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-watch/wp/2017/03/09/the-big-lie-about-sex-offenders/>).

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.

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 397 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 this valuable bill.

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

Senate Bill 621 (2019) - Judicial Proceedings Department of Legislative Services

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

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.

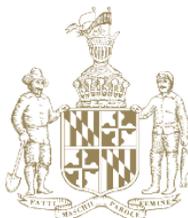
Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Testimony_JPC_SB0397.pdf

Uploaded by: Carter, Jill

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of SB0397 - Correctional Services - Diminution Credits -
Education
Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee
on February 10, 2021**

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

Senate Bill 397 seeks to address the problems of mass incarceration and recidivism while reducing the overall cost to the taxpayer of incarceration.

This bill will authorize diminution credits to reduce the term of confinement of an inmate who earns certain educational certificates, diplomas, or degrees. Specifically, Senate Bill 397 allows up to 90 days reduction of a sentence for at least 600 hours of related coursework, an intermediate high school academic certificate, or a high school diploma.

According to the Vera Institute of Justice, Maryland spends an estimated \$44,601 per prisoner annually. 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 SB0397.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill P. Carter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J" and a stylized "P" and "C".

Jill P. Carter

SB 397-Reduce Prison Sentences for Completing DCS

Uploaded by: Chan, Sam

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District 45. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

Having a criminal record reduces the likelihood of getting a job or callback by 50%. This is in part due to the negative social stigma associated with having a record. Additionally, thousands of Marylanders exit state and local correctional facilities and return to our communities without educational or vocational experience to support their successful reentry upon release. The effect is even more pronounced for African Americans who face the implicit and explicit bias of America today. The natural consequence of having no legal means to make a living is the necessity of making a living through alternative means, which are penalized by the criminal justice system. These barriers lead to a cycle of recidivism for individuals with experiences in the criminal legal system.

Incentivizing educational and vocational opportunities to incarcerated Marylanders gives them a better chance of attaining meaningful occupational credentials that can strengthen their resumes and allow them a greater chance of success at finding gainful employment upon reentry, thus reducing the risk of recidivism. This reduces costs associated with incarceration and provides a more skilled workforce for local employers. Most importantly, it improves the lives of our fellow Marylanders.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sam Chan
207 E. Preston St Apt 3A
Baltimore MD 21202
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

SB 397- Correctional Services - Diminution Credits

Uploaded by: Egan, Ashley

Position: FAV



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Shared Voices for Liberal Religious Values in Maryland

Testimony in Support of SB 397 -Correctional Services -Diminution Credits

To: Senator William Smith, Jr., Chair, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Karen Clark, Criminal Justice Task Force Chair,
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Date: February 10, 2021

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry asks for your support of SB 397 – Correctional Services-Diminution Credits. Our faith calls us to support legislation that aligns with our spiritual values. SB 397 connects with our first principle – to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of all people. The bill aims to better prepare our returning citizens for a successful transition back into their community. 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 academic educational programs or who have worked to develop technical skills, have a significantly better chance of not recidivating (43% less) 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's evaluation of Maryland's Correctional system in 2017 suggested making four major improvements. SB 397 addresses one of these recommendations. Its goal is to motivate people to participate in more educational opportunities and to reward them when reaching significant goals. For example, if a person were to earn a GED certificate or complete a vocational training program or another educational benchmark, a block of diminution credits would be awarded in recognition of achieving and working hard to accomplish the goal. These time credits could be up to as 90 days per program. The commissioner sets the amount of credit for various goals.

The large block of diminution credits sets a goal and a reward of achievement for those behind the walls to make the hard work worthwhile while forming good study habits and improving self-esteem. It is hoped that this will help motivate others to try this path and to build a more positive educational climate while inside. Maryland used to have a robust correctional education program and this is a right step to help rebuild it and have our returning citizens reentering their communities better prepared to become productive and engaged citizens.

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry asks for a favorable vote on SB 397.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Clark – UULM-MD Task Force Chair

UULM-MD c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044,

www.uulmmd.org info@uulmmd.org www.facebook.com/uulmmd [www.Twitter.com/uulmmd](https://www.twitter.com/uulmmd)

SB 397-Reduce Prison Sentences for Completing DCS

Uploaded by: Esposito, Lindsay

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District 45. I'm proud to have been a resident of Baltimore City since 2008 and a homeowner and voter in the Greenmount West neighborhood for the last 8 years. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

Having a criminal record reduces the likelihood of getting a job or callback by 50%. This is in part due to the negative social stigma associated with having a record. Additionally, thousands of Marylanders exit state and local correctional facilities and return to our communities without educational or vocational experience to support their successful reentry upon release. The effect is even more pronounced for African Americans who face the implicit and explicit bias of America today. The natural consequence of having no legal means to make a living is the necessity of making a living through alternative means, which are penalized by the criminal justice system. These barriers lead to a cycle of recidivism for individuals with experiences in the criminal legal system.

Incentivizing educational and vocational opportunities to incarcerated Marylanders gives them a better chance of attaining meaningful occupational credentials that can strengthen their resumes and allow them a greater chance of success at finding gainful employment upon reentry, thus reducing the risk of recidivism. This reduces costs associated with incarceration and provides a more skilled workforce for local employers. Most importantly, it improves the lives of our fellow Marylanders.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Lindsay Esposito
434 E Oliver
Baltimore, MD 21202
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

SB 397-Reduce Prison Sentences for Completing DCS

Uploaded by: Fertig, Benjamin

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District 11. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

Having a criminal record reduces the likelihood of getting a job or callback by 50%. This is in part due to the negative social stigma associated with having a record. Additionally, thousands of Marylanders exit state and local correctional facilities and return to our communities without educational or vocational experience to support their successful reentry upon release. The effect is even more pronounced for African Americans who face the implicit and explicit bias of America today. The natural consequence of having no legal means to make a living is the necessity of making a living through alternative means, which are penalized by the criminal justice system. These barriers lead to a cycle of recidivism for individuals with experiences in the criminal legal system.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Fertig
2722 Quarry Heights Way, Baltimore, MD 21209
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

QuakerVoice_Testimony_SB397.pdf

Uploaded by: Finch, Molly

Position: FAV

Quaker Voice of Maryland

February 8, 2021

To: Chair William C. Smith, Jr., Vice-Chair Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, and Members of the Maryland General Assembly Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Quaker Voice of Maryland, Molly Finch, Clerk

Re: SB 397 - Correctional Services - Diminution Credits - Education

Position: SUPPORT

Quaker Voice of Maryland was formed in 2019 by Quaker Meetings throughout the State of Maryland to give Maryland Quakers a more effective voice in state-level issues that speak to our values. Our faith as Quakers includes the commitment to build a more peaceful and equitable society through legislation and policies that affect human dignity, well-being and non-violence.

We support SB 397 which would add a new category of sentence diminution credits for the attainment of major milestones based on educational accomplishments, such as satisfactory completion of a course or achieving a diploma.

People who have experienced incarceration are more likely to be successful in obtaining jobs and becoming contributing members once they re-enter society, which, in turn, reduces the likelihood of recidivism. This statement is not just an assumption; The Abell Foundation recently issued a study of education in our prisons and this was one of their findings.

In addition to the benefits of this bill for people experiencing incarceration, this bill will also lead to a decrease in costs associated with crime and punishment by reducing the number of people who end up back in the criminal justice system.

Quaker Voice of Maryland urges the members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee to support SB397.

In Light,

Molly Finch
Clerk, Quaker Voice of Maryland
(quakervoicemd@gmail.com)

Reference:

The Abell Report, 2017, "Prison Education: Maximizing the Potential for Employment and Successful Community Reintegration" (<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED591933.pdf>)

HB0397 - 2.10.21 -- Correctional Services - Diminu

Uploaded by: Fry, Donald

Position: FAV



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 397 -- CORRECTIONAL SERVICES - DIMINUTION CREDITS - EDUCATION

February 10, 2021

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

POSITION: Support

Senate Bill 397 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 397 would also prohibit the diminution credits to be given to individuals who are serving sentences associated with certain sexual offenses.

Each year in Maryland, approximately 36,000 people are incarcerated at a cost of more than \$1 billion per year according to an analysis by the Justice Policy Institute and the Vera Institute of Justice. When these individuals are released from incarceration, they face a myriad of challenges, including a lack of affordable housing, legal challenges, health issues, and the inability to meet basic needs, such as clothing and food. Securing meaningful employment is one of the greatest challenges faced by returning citizens, and in many ways, the most important to overcome. According to the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center, formerly incarcerated individuals who obtained employment and earned higher wages shortly after their release were far less likely to reoffend during the first year than those who did not.

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.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

111 South Calvert Street • Suite 1700 • Baltimore, Maryland • 21202-6180

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org

Senate Bill 397 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 397 is consistent with the GBC's *2021 Legislative Priorities*, which encourage policymakers to "improve public safety through enhanced coordination among criminal justice agencies, implementation of comprehensive violence reduction strategies, and coordinated re-entry services."

For the reasons stated above, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report of Senate Bill 397.

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 66-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.

SB 397-Reduce Prison Sentences for Completing DCS

Uploaded by: Gorny, Daniel

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District 8. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



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Having a criminal record reduces the likelihood of getting a job or callback by 50%. This is in part due to the negative social stigma associated with having a record. Additionally, thousands of Marylanders exit state and local correctional facilities and return to our communities without educational or vocational experience to support their successful reentry upon release. The effect is even more pronounced for African Americans who face the implicit and explicit bias of America today. The natural consequence of having no legal means to make a living is the necessity of making a living through alternative means, which are penalized by the criminal justice system. These barriers lead to a cycle of recidivism for individuals with experiences in the criminal legal system.

Incentivizing educational and vocational opportunities to incarcerated Marylanders gives them a better chance of attaining meaningful occupational credentials that can strengthen their resumes and allow them a greater chance of success at finding gainful employment upon reentry, thus reducing the risk of recidivism. This reduces costs associated with incarceration and provides a more skilled workforce for local employers. Most importantly, it improves the lives of our fellow Marylanders.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniel Gorny
3411 Upton Rd.
Parkville, MD 21234

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

MAP - SB 397 - Dim Credits - Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Jefferson , Stacey

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 397

Correctional Services – Diminution Credits - Education

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 10, 2021

Submitted by Stacey Jefferson and Julia Gross, 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

Julia Gross, Co-Chair
P: 410-528-0021x6029

E: jgross@mdhungersolutions.org

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports SB 397, which encourages individuals who are incarcerated to seek educational advancement by providing diminution credits 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 should be encouraged and supported. Currently, Maryland's mandatory education law require 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 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 diminutions 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 advance 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 397 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 the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 397.

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.

SB 397 Dim Credits KTJ.pdf

Uploaded by: Johnson, Korey

Position: FAV

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 397: **CORRECTIONAL SERVICES – DIMINUTION CREDITS – EDUCATION**

TO: Chairman William Smith, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
FROM: Korey T. Johnson, Esq., Senior Policy Researcher – Job Opportunities Task Force
DATE: February 10, 2021

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 397 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 to successful re-entry. Maryland's mandatory education law requires incarcerated individuals 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, incarcerated persons, 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 completing the program.

In reward those who are steadfast in their commitment to higher education or learning a skill, Senate Bill 397 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 a 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 Senate Bill 397.

SB0397 Written Testimony A Juberg.pdf

Uploaded by: Juberg, Arielle

Position: FAV

Arielle Juberg
Baltimore, Maryland
District 8

Testimony in Support of Bill SB0397, Correctional Services - Diminution Credits - Education
To: Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
From: Arielle Juberg

My name is Arielle Juberg. I am a resident of Baltimore County in District 8. I belong to Showing Up for Racial Justice in Baltimore. I am also a church member and volunteer. I am testifying in support of SB0397, Correctional Services - Diminution Credits – Education.

The title of this bill includes the term “correctional services”. I won’t be the first person to ask if this term accurately describes our current criminal justice system. The mechanisms that feed people into the criminal justice system are deeply flawed, and the services within the system often fall short of the true need. It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

Because of long-standing injustices within our education system and economy, people of color and people with lower incomes are less likely to have received high-quality school services and job training. These are the people who disproportionately fill our jails and prisons. However, even in these systems, education and skill building opportunities fall short.

That is why I am asking for a favorable report for SB0397. This legislation represents a small step in improving lives and undoing intersecting levels of inequality. Incentivizing educational and vocational opportunities to incarcerated Marylanders gives them a better chance of attaining meaningful occupational credentials that can strengthen their resumes. It give people a greater chance of success at finding gainful employment upon reentry, thus reducing the risk of recidivism. This, in turn, reduces incarceration costs and provides a skilled workforce for local employers. Most importantly, it improves the lives of our fellow Marylanders

For all these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report for SB0397.

MD Catholic Conference_FAV_SB0397.pdf

Uploaded by: Kraska, MJ

Position: FAV



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 10, 2021

SB 397

Correctional Services - Diminution Credits – Education

Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 397. 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 397 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 397 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 397.

Murray SB397 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Murray, Kerriann

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District 10. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

Having a criminal record reduces the likelihood of getting a job or callback by 50%. This is in part due to the negative social stigma associated with having a record. Additionally, thousands of Marylanders exit state and local correctional facilities and return to our communities without educational or vocational experience to support their successful reentry upon release. The effect is even more pronounced for African Americans who face the implicit and explicit bias of America today. The natural consequence of having no legal means to make a living is the necessity of making a living through alternative means, which are penalized by the criminal justice system. These barriers lead to a cycle of recidivism for individuals with experiences in the criminal legal system.

Incentivizing educational and vocational opportunities to incarcerated Marylanders gives them a better chance of attaining meaningful occupational credentials that can strengthen their resumes and allow them a greater chance of success at finding gainful employment upon reentry, thus reducing the risk of recidivism. This reduces costs associated with incarceration and provides a more skilled workforce for local employers. Most importantly, it improves the lives of our fellow Marylanders.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kerriann Eileen Murray
221 Northway Rd, Reisterstown, 21136
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

SB0397_WWCC_F_B.Newton.pdf

Uploaded by: Newton, Bryan

Position: FAV



32000 Campus Dr. • Salisbury, MD 21804
(410) 334-2800 • www.worwic.edu

Judicial Proceedings

February 8, 2021

Senate Bill 397

Supporting Testimony

Dr. Bryan Newton
Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Services
Wor-Wic Community College

Please accept this written testimony on behalf of Wor-Wic Community College, a partner in providing education to incarcerated individuals on Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore. The college thanks Senator Carter for sponsoring this bill.

Wor-Wic has been a long-time proponent of education's role in reducing recidivism rates among incarcerated individuals, participating in both local and national initiatives bringing greater educational opportunities to Maryland's largest prison, Eastern Correctional Institution (ECI) in Somerset County. The college provides adult basic education at ECI as well as credit academic programs. Credit academic programs have been offered since 2017 through the Second Chance Pell Program in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education. Wor-Wic was one of only 67 colleges nationally chosen to provide academic credit programs to inmates using federal Pell funds, and the pilot program led Congress to approve in late 2020 the reintroduction of Pell grants for inmates.

Greater incentives for prison education as proposed in the bill will help reduce mass incarceration by providing the resources prisoners need to succeed post-release. According to the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, there is a 43% reduction in recidivism rates for inmates that participate in prison education programs. Education also reduces costs for taxpayers

according to the Vera Institute of Justice by avoiding inmates return to prison. Vera estimates that taxpayers yield a \$5 return on investment for every \$1 that is spent on education for those incarcerated.

As employers demand more credentials beyond a high school education (more than 70% of jobs will require something more than a high school diploma by 2027), it is imperative that incarcerated individuals have greater access to education in preparation for the job market upon release. SB 397 enables prisons and higher education institutions working together to incentivize inmates to take advantage of education opportunities that prepare them for life post-release. With the recently approved reintroduction of federal Pell grants for incarcerated individuals, prisoners will have the financial resources to pursue higher education. Financial resources provided by the federal government, with state incentives for earlier release as described in SB 397, will help inmates prepare for life after confinement and make them much more likely to succeed in a competitive job market.

In 2019 at our last graduation at ECI before the pandemic, James Elliott, the International President of the student honor association Phi Theta Kappa, spoke to our Wor-Wic ECI graduates, several of whom were also inductees into the honor society. What was notable about the presentation is that Mr. Elliott, a graduate of Delaware Technical Community College, was formerly incarcerated for six years for his part in an armed robbery. Mr. Elliott shared with the graduates that it was higher education, provided in prison that led to his ability to succeed and finish his community college degree after release. This past fall, Mr. Elliott enrolled to continue his education at the Ivy League's Columbia University.

SB 397 will incentivize education for inmates, which is so important to their post-release success, and reduce the long-term state costs for mass incarceration in Maryland. Wor-Wic Community College recommends passage of this bill, and we thank you for your serious consideration.

SB 379-Reduce Prison Sentences for Completing DCS

Uploaded by: Pereschuk, Alicia

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District 43. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

Having a criminal record reduces the likelihood of getting a job or callback by 50%. This is in part due to the negative social stigma associated with having a record. Additionally, thousands of Marylanders exit state and local correctional facilities and return to our communities without educational or vocational experience to support their successful reentry upon release. The effect is even more pronounced for African Americans who face the implicit and explicit bias of America today. The natural consequence of having no legal means to make a living is the necessity of making a living through alternative means, which are penalized by the criminal justice system. These barriers lead to a cycle of recidivism for individuals with experiences in the criminal legal system.

Incentivizing educational and vocational opportunities to incarcerated Marylanders gives them a better chance of attaining meaningful occupational credentials that can strengthen their resumes and allow them a greater chance of success at finding gainful employment upon reentry, thus reducing the risk of recidivism. This reduces costs associated with incarceration and provides a more skilled workforce for local employers. Most importantly, it improves the lives of our fellow Marylanders.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Alicia Pereschuk
404 W 29th St
Baltimore MD 21211
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

SB 397-Reduce Prison Sentences for Completing DCS

Uploaded by: Powell, Holly

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District 3. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Holly Powell
2308 Cambridge Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21224
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

SB 397-Reduce Prison Sentences for Completing DCS

Uploaded by: Rehr, Nathan

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District **45**. I am an active member of my community association and a health professional who is interested in eliminating the health disparities that occur with racial discrimination in our society. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

Having a criminal record reduces the likelihood of getting a job or callback by 50%. This is in part due to the negative social stigma associated with having a record. Additionally, thousands of Marylanders exit state and local correctional facilities and return to our communities without educational or vocational experience to support their successful reentry upon release. The effect is even more pronounced for African Americans who face the implicit and explicit bias of America today. The natural consequence of having no legal means to make a living is the necessity of making a living through alternative means, which are penalized by the criminal justice system. These barriers lead to a cycle of recidivism for individuals with experiences in the criminal legal system.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nathan Rehr

450 E. Federal Street Baltimore, MD 21202

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

SB 397-Reduce Prison Sentences for Completing DCS

Uploaded by: Rochkind, Jonathan

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District 43. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Rochkind
755 Melville Ave
Baltimore MD 21218

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

SB397- Support- JS.pdf

Uploaded by: Sell, Jennifer

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Annapolis and Anne Arundel County. I am a resident of MD District 33. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.

Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

Having a criminal record reduces the likelihood of getting a job or callback by 50%. This is in part due to the negative social stigma associated with having a record. Additionally, thousands of Marylanders exit state and local correctional facilities and return to our communities without educational or vocational experience to support their successful reentry upon release. The effect is even more pronounced for African Americans who face the implicit and explicit bias of America today. The natural consequence of having no legal means to make a living is the necessity of making a living through alternative means, which are penalized by the criminal justice system. These barriers lead to a cycle of recidivism for individuals with experiences in the criminal legal system.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Sell
444 Lynwood Dr
Severna Park, MD 21145
Showing Up for Racial Justice Annapolis and Anne Arundel County

Copy of SB 397-Reduce Prison Sentences for Complet

Uploaded by: Shock, Jack

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District 411 am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jack Shock
4444 La Plata Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21211
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

SB 397-Reduce Prison Sentences for Completing DCS

Uploaded by: Todd, Tamara

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District 10. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Tamara Todd
221 Northway Rd, Reisterstown, MD 21136
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

SB 397-Reduce Prison Sentences for Completing DCS

Uploaded by: Wilkins, Katherine

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District **12**. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

It is well known that the criminal legal system, from policing to the courts, targets, arrests, and imprisons Black people at rates well above white people. It is especially true in Maryland, where we imprison a larger share of our young Black men than any other US state.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katherine Wilkins

10651 Gramercy Pl, Unit 257, Columbia, MD 21044

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

OPD Statement_SB397_Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Williams, Krystal

Position: FAV



POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: SB0397 Correctional Services - Diminution Credits - Education
POSITION: SUPPORT
DATE: February 8, 2021

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 397.

Senate Bill 397 would award an additional 90 diminution credits to individuals in Maryland correctional facilities and reduce their term of confinement by successfully obtaining a certain educational certificate, diploma or degree. This bill is consistent with nationwide efforts and ongoing efforts here in Maryland to ensure meaningful and impactful criminal justice reform. Specifically, this bill would expand greatly needed opportunities for incarcerated individuals to obtain good time credits, which in turn helps to reduce prison populations and costs, and public safety within correctional facilities, and further incentivizes and supports individuals' success upon release.

Numerous studies have shown that increasing education and educational opportunities for incarcerated individuals has a direct impact on reducing recidivism. For instance, one such study funded by the U.S. Department of Justice found that individuals who participated in correctional education programs had a 43 percent lower rate of recidivism than those who did not, and further that those same individuals improved their chances of employment after release by at least 13 percent.¹ In addition to these rehabilitative benefits, it is reported that for "every dollar invested in prison education programs saves taxpayers, on average, between \$4 and \$5 in three-year incarceration costs."² This bill helps lead Maryland in a positive direction with necessary legislative reform aligned with other states across the country recognizing and receiving the benefits associated with enhanced educational attainment for incarcerated individuals.

For these reasons, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender strongly urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 397.

¹ Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders, & Miles, Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education, A Meta-Analysis of Programs That Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults (2013)

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR266.html

² Lois M. Davis, Higher Education Programs in Prison, What We Know Now and What We Should Focus on Going Forward (August 2019)

https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE300/PE342/RAND_PE342.pdf

SB 397-Reduce Prison Sentences for Completing DCS

Uploaded by: Yoder, Daryl

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Out for Justice. I am a resident of MD District 12. I am testifying in **support of Senate Bill 397**.



Senate Bill 397 would increase the diminution credits awarded to someone who is incarcerated if they successfully complete a specifically enumerated educational or vocational training program.

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Incentivizing educational and vocational opportunities to incarcerated Marylanders gives them a better chance of attaining meaningful occupational credentials that can strengthen their resumes and allow them a greater chance of success at finding gainful employment upon reentry, thus reducing the risk of recidivism. This reduces costs associated with incarceration and provides a more skilled workforce for local employers. Most importantly, it improves the lives of our fellow Marylanders.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 397**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Daryl Yoder

309 Glenmore Ave.

Catonsville, MD 21228

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

SB397_AACC_FWA_DS Lindsay.pdf

Uploaded by: Lindsay, Dawn

Position: FWA

SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

February 8, 2021

TESTIMONY

**Submitted by
Dr. Dawn Lindsay, President**

**SB 397: Correctional Services - Diminution Credits - Education
Position: Favorable with Amendment**

As president of Anne Arundel Community College, **I am asking that the Committee to support an amendment that would give priority to public community colleges to provide the instruction for vocational and technical training leading to a certificate and/or degree.**

Our mission at Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) is to respond to the needs of our diverse community by offering high quality, affordable, accessible and innovative lifelong learning opportunities. Key to student success is equity and realizing we need to meet students where they are and provide pathways to prosperous careers.

Community colleges are accessible in most communities, even remote areas where private universities and colleges are often not prevalent. Community colleges offer career-focused degree and certificate programs that lead to direct employment after incarceration. Community colleges are directly connected with employers and community-based organizations through the American Job Center and have direct access to supportive services that benefit returning citizens, such as assistance with transportation and housing.

At Anne Arundel Community College, through the Second Chance Pell program, AACC offered credit, certificate programs in Business Management and Entrepreneurship at the Jessup Correctional Institute, a maximum security prison for men in Jessup, MD, from 2016 – 2019. Thirty-seven incarcerated students completed one or both certificate programs. One student was also able to complete his Associate of Arts degree in Business Management by transferring credits from a previous institution.

Since 1998, AACC has offered adult basic skills, life skills and GED preparation courses to male and female inmates at the Ordinance Road Detention Center, a pre-trial, short-term sentence detention facility in Glen Burnie, Maryland. Over 1,000 incarcerated students have earned their GED through participating in the Success through Education Program.

We support this legislation to award a diminution credit to reduce the term of confinement to an inmate, and I urge the committee to support an amendment to give priority to public community colleges, who are already working in this space with successful results.

SB0397_MACC_FWA_B.Sadusky.pdf

Uploaded by: Sadusky, Dr. Bernard

Position: FWA



SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY

February 10, 2021

Submitted by

**Dr. Bernard Sadusky, Executive Director
Maryland Association of Community Colleges**

SB 397 – Correctional Services – Diminution Credits - Education

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges ("MACC") representing Maryland's 16 community colleges supports this legislation that would encourage and provide incentives for inmates to further their education. Increased education will assist incarcerated individuals to find meaningful employment upon their release.

Recent changes to Pell Grant funding have expanded access to postsecondary education opportunities for incarcerated persons. Accompanying this benefit is a responsibility that will require inmates to become informed consumers regarding the array of postsecondary opportunities. To assist in preventing costly mistakes, MACC suggests an amendment that would require program offerings meet a cost-efficiency standard, assure high quality and will transfer.

MACC requests two amendments to this legislation. The first would require that the post-secondary education and training programs provided under this legislation be approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission ("MHEC") to ensure that the participating inmates benefit from a clear pathway to either degree completion, licensure, or credentialing. Without the requirement of MHEC approval, the scarce funding resources for continued education may be wasted on programs which do not provide the increased opportunity offered by this legislation.

The second amendment would be a requirement the inmates receive fiduciary assistance prior to entering into any postsecondary agreements in order to understand the limits of financial aid assistance and to select cost-efficient programs of study.

DPSCS_LOI_SB397.pdf

Uploaded by: Kahl, Catherine

Position: INFO



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of the Secretary Office of Legislative Affairs

45 Calvert Street, Suite B7A-C, Annapolis MD 21401
410-260-6070 • Fax: 410-974-2586 • www.dpccs.state.md.us

STATE OF MARYLAND

BILL: SENATE BILL 397

LAWRENCE J. HOGAN, JR.
GOVERNOR

POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
LT. GOVERNOR

EXPLANATION: This bill allows for a deduction of 90 days in advance from the inmate's term of confinement - per program completed - if the inmate successfully obtains an intermediate high academic certificate, a technical or vocational training program certificate, a state high school diploma, an associate degree or a bachelor's degree.

ROBERT L. GREEN
SECRETARY

RACHEL SESSA
CHIEF OF STAFF

COMMENTS:

WAYNE HILL
ACTING DEPUTY
SECRETARY
OPERATIONS

- The Department's Division of Correction (DOC) operates approximately 17 State correctional facilities which house offenders sentenced to incarceration for 18 months and longer. The Department also runs the Baltimore City Pretrial Complex, under the Division of Pretrial Detention and Services (DPDS), which houses pretrial detainees and inmates sentenced to incarceration for 18 months and less.
- The Department of Labor provides correctional educational opportunities to inmates through programs offered at each State correctional institution, the Patuxent Institution, and all pre-release units. The mission is to provide incarcerated individuals with high quality services that facilitate successful transition into Maryland's workforce and communities.
- Education has been linked to lower recidivism rates. A 2013 report from Rand Corporation determined "inmates that participate in academic and occupational training programs are 43 percent less likely to return to prison."¹
- In addition, research from the United States Department of Justice cites that prison education has profound and often-life changing benefits. It notes that there is a substantial reduction in violence, and disciplinary infractions in the correctional institutions.

CHRISTOHER McCULLY
DEPUTY SECRETARY
ADMINISTRATION

CAROLYN J. SCRUGGS
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¹ RAND Corporation. (2013, August 22). *Education and Vocational Training in Prisons Reduces Recidivism, Improves Job Outlook*. Retrieved from: <http://www.rand.org/news/press/2013/08/22.html>

- The Second Chance Pell Program supports postsecondary education programs for individuals in prison and affords inmates the opportunity to receive higher education certificates and degrees. Four of Maryland's higher education institutions were awarded the Second Chance Pell Grant: Goucher College; Anne Arundel Community College; Wor-Wic Community College; and the University of Baltimore. With the recent expansion of the Second Chance Pell Program, the DOC is growing partnerships with more colleges throughout the State, including the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Bowie State University.
- In December 2020, Congress passed a COVID-19 relief bill that included Pell restoration funding. With the recent expansion of the Second Chance Pell Program, the DOC is growing partnerships with more colleges throughout the State, including University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Bowie State University.
- More importantly, correctional education provides inmates returning to the community increased knowledge and skills and will assist the offender with maintaining sustainability in the community, thus lowering recidivism rates.
- The Department would like to point out one major issue with the bill. Specifically, the bill calls for a deduction "in advance" from the term of confinement. Applying diminution credits in advance is not possible as successful completion of the program is a requirement under the bill. If SB 397 passes in its current form without an amendment, there will likely be legal issues down the road.

CONCLUSION: The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as it deliberates on Senate Bill 397.

REVERSE