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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.