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Baltimore and Howard Counties

Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees

Estates and Trusts
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 26, 2021

SUPPORT

HB102 Correctional Services - Inmates - Labor, Job Training, and Educational Courses

Dear Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary and members of the Judiciary Committee,

HB102 is introduced as one part of our ongoing effort to achieve true and sustained criminal justice reform. Reform which serves to decreased overall crime, minimize recidivism and create a path to true criminal rehabilitation. Rehabilitation which corrects behavior and succeeds in allowing inmates to re-enter society prepared, equipped and able to contribute to it in a positive, productive manner. Rehabilitation that closes the revolving door.

HB102 does this by addressing head-on the peonage system that is a vestige of slavery and a remnant of disproven theories of criminal justice and perverse economic incentives for perpetuating systems and a legacy of labor exploitation.

- Require the Department of Corrections and Maryland Corrections Enterprises to compensate inmate labor at the State minimum wage;
- Remove provisions allowing inmate wages to be deducted for room and board clothing)
- Ensure that when applicable, a portion of inmate wages go towards meeting their child support, victim restitution, victim compensation and other external financial obligations;
- Expand job training opportunities with focus on marketable skills and partnerships labor unions and trade associations
- Increase educational offerings to all inmates including certificate and degree opportunities beyond the GED level and with the amendment offered, financial literacy which

Quoting from "Finances After Prison A Collaborative Approach" by John E. Wetzal, Pennsylvania Secretary of Corrections and Robin L. Wiessmann, Pennsylvania Secretary of Banking and Securities, published in 2018,

"Returning citizens have the best chance at success in the community if they have the tools they need upon release. Having a high school or equivalent degree, completing job training, gaining access to housing, medical care, and employment, and achieving financial capability are all essential parts of becoming a productive citizen."

In response to the Fiscal Note, please review **2020 MCE**

https://www.mce.md.gov/Portals/0/PDF2020/Annual%20Report%202020_12_9.pdf

We can do what is right, and can no longer afford not to.. I urge a favorable report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terri Hill".