



HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
House Bill 25  
Rehabilitation and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act  
February 1, 2022  
Favorable

This letter is in support of House Bill 25: Rehabilitation and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act. This Act would require the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to establish goals for the number of incarcerated people in rehabilitation programs, will establish a tracking system of individuals progress in programs, will require the Governor to annual appropriate funds to DPSCS for the use of rehabilitation programs and tracking systems of such programs, and will require DPSCS to assist incarcerated people with accessing federal education grants.

Since 2016 The University of Baltimore has provided college courses to incarcerated men through the U.S. Department of Education's Second Chance Pell Grant Experimental Sites Initiative. Our program is being offered at Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI). We have served over 100 men, with approximately 50 enrolled each semester. Many of our students who started their college education at JCI are now enrolled in courses on our campus. We are committed to helping these students complete their college degree – whether it be while they are still in prison or when released.

As a higher education institution that already provides educational programming inside Maryland prisons, I support the expansion of rehabilitative programs and systems to ensure people in prison receive adequate services. Historically, such rehabilitative programs in prison have been underfunded. This bill will allow for the use of state funds to expand programming. Expanding access to rehabilitative and educational programs will help to improve the educational and life outcomes of the incarcerated men and women in Maryland's prisons.

The intention of House Bill 25 would increase the number of people who participate in prison education programs and indirectly will impact public safety. Many studies find that correctional education participation leads to reductions in



recidivism, increased employment, higher earnings, and other benefits. The most recent study by RAND found that prisoners who participated in correctional education programs had a 43 percent lower rate of recidivism than those who did not participate. Additionally, those who participate in correctional education had a 13 percent higher chance of obtaining employment.<sup>1</sup> Participation in prison college programs also improves self-esteem levels, makes the prison environment safer, and motivates people to continue education once released.<sup>2</sup>

The University of Baltimore supports HB25 and urges the committee's favorable report of HB 25.

Kurt L. Schmoke  
President of The University of Baltimore

Andrea Cantora  
Associate Professor  
School of Criminal Justice

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<sup>1</sup> Davis, L. M., Bozick, R., Steele, J. L., Saunders, J., & Miles, J. N. V. (2013). *Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education: A Meta-analysis of programs that provide education to incarcerated adults*. The RAND Corporation.

<sup>2</sup> Winterfield, L., Coggeshall, M., Burke-Storer, M., Correa, V. & Tidd, S. (2009). *The Effects of Postsecondary Correctional Education*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center.