



House Judiciary Committee
TESTIMONY

Submitted by Dr. Brad Phillips, Executive Director

February 1, 2022

HB 25 - Rehabilitation and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act

POSITION: Favorable with Amendment

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges, representing Maryland's 16 public two-year institutions of postsecondary education, support this legislation and thanks Delegate Amprey for supporting an amendment that includes Anne Arundel Community College, Hagerstown Community College and Wor-Wic Community among the institutions of higher education to consult with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to assist inmates in accessing federal Pell Grants.

The above three community colleges have prison facilities within their respective service area. They have been offering credit and/or non-credit program to inmates for several decades (although recent Covid restrictions has recently delayed instruction for many of these programs). Our institutions know that providing education in prisons is proven to reduce recidivism rates and is associated with higher employment rates, which will improve public safety and allow individuals to return home to their communities and contribute to society.

We were very pleased that in December 2020, when Congress passed legislation that removed many eligibility requirements for Pell Grant recipients and other forms of financial aid making it more accessible for incarcerated individuals to attend college. However, with access to financial support, there needs to have a thorough understanding of the limitations and best use of this opportunity.

MACC is pleased to support this legislation and pleased to offer the experiences of these colleges to work with the Department of Public Safety and Corrections as they adopt the rules and regulations to carry out this legislation.