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TO: The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee

FROM: Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: HB 0416 – Resources and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act (**Support**)

The Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable report on House Bill 416. This legislation, sponsored by Del. Amprey, would require the Department of Labor to set goals for and track the number of inmates in educational programs with assistance from the State Department of Education and the Department of Human Services. The bill would also require the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to assist inmates in accessing federal Pell grants for education at certain institutions of higher education within the State, and require the Governor to provide funding to the Department of Labor for use in education programs.

Research shows that individuals who participate in education programs are less likely to return to prison than those who do not participate in education programs.¹ Therefore, while investing in education programs for inmates requires upfront funding, it will bring long-term savings for the State, as lower recidivism rates lead to savings on funding that would otherwise be spent on incarceration.² Additionally, prisons with education programs have less violence among inmates.³

A college education also creates opportunities for social mobility for families and improves generational outcomes, with better access to employment, increased income, improved

¹ Doug Irving, *The Case for Correctional Education in U.S. Prisons*, THE RAND CORPORATION (Jan. 3, 2016), <https://www.rand.org/blog/rand-review/2016/01/course-correction-the-case-for-correctional-education.html>.

² Kathleen Bender, *Education Opportunities in Prison Are Key to Reducing Crime*, CTR. FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS (Mar. 2, 2018), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/education-opportunities-prison-key-reducing-crime/>.

³ VERA INST. OF JUSTICE, *Expanding Access to Postsecondary Education in Prison: Fact Sheet for Corrections Leaders* (Jan. 2017), <https://www.vera.org/publications/postsecondary-education-in-prison-fact-sheet-for-correction-leaders>.

This bill letter is a statement of the Office of Attorney General's policy position on the referenced pending legislation. For a legal or constitutional analysis of the bill, Members of the House and Senate should consult with the Counsel to the General Assembly, Sandy Brantley. She can be reached at 410-946-5600 or sbrantley@oag.state.md.us.

health, and better civic engagement.⁴ Formerly incarcerated individuals also feel greater support upon release and can better reintegrate into their communities.⁵ Thus, Maryland should provide more educational opportunities for incarcerated individuals.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable report on House Bill 416.

⁴ Bender, *supra* note 2.

⁵ *Id.*