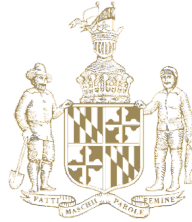


MARLON AMPREY  
*Legislative District 40*  
Baltimore City

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Economic Matters Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 21, 2023

**Testimony of Delegate Amprey in Support of House Bill 416:**

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

At the end of 2022, the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Division of Corrections reported a DOC population of 17,299 people. A meager 9 percent of Marylanders call Baltimore City home, yet 40 percent of Maryland's residents in state prisons are from Baltimore City. According to the U.S. Census, 31 percent of Maryland's population is Black, yet 72 percent of Maryland's DOC population is Black. These figures are an indication of two things - that racial inequities are alive and well in our state - and that at some point in the lives of 17,299 people, the state failed them and their families. Now, we owe it to those who are presently experiencing incarceration, and to the communities some of them will ultimately be released into, to ensure that they have the tools and skills necessary to successfully re-enter communities across the state. Education is not only a fundamental right that should be afforded to every human being regardless of their circumstance, research shows that people experiencing incarceration are 48 percent less likely to recidivate than those who do not. Isn't that the point of temporarily removing people from society and incarcerating them to rehabilitate them and ensure that they do not reoffend upon release? Though the carceral system in this country chews people up and spits them back into society unprepared for successful re-entry, that does not have to be the case here in Maryland. We will lead this nation in preparing those who are experiencing incarceration for successful lives upon release, so that they too can have a shot at the American dream.

House Bill 416 requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to assist inmates in accessing federal Pell grants for higher education; requires the Maryland Department of Labor to set goals for the number of inmates in education programs and establish tracking systems relating to the number of inmates and their progress in education programs; and requires the State Department of Education and the Department of Human Services to assist the Maryland Department of Labor in establishing tracking systems for the number of inmates in education programs; and the progress of inmates in education programs. In short, this bill signifies that Maryland is ready to be a leader in prison education and leave no one behind, even those who have found themselves at the mercy of the justice system.

**I urge a favorable report on House Bill 416.**

Respectfully,

Delegate Marlon Amprey, 40<sup>th</sup> Legislative District - MD