

HB0416 REAP Act SUPPORT (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Anne Kirsch

Position: FAV

Anne Bocchini Kirsch
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HBo416 - REAP Act - SUPPORT

As a parole advocate and a returning citizen, I know that nothing is more important to reentry success than education, vocational skills and cognitive programming. In fact, PREPARE operates on the principle that a successful reentry begins at intake, and that success is created when an individual is guided through their incarceration with an eye to positive growth, development of self-efficacy and person-centered treatment and programming. But building individualized plans requires the right programming in the right places so the right people have access - and that means we need to map the current landscape of resources, assess the needs of the population, and then use that information to maximize the use of existing resources in each case.

The restoration of Pell Grants to incarcerated people is bringing an influx of higher education opportunities to Maryland prisons. Changing social views on the purpose of incarceration is reshaping the correctional system with a range of programming designed to deliver strong, productive returning citizens. An unprecedented amount of money is being invested in rehabilitation and reentry infrastructure. This is good and needed, but Maryland needs to make the best possible use of all its resources. That means investing in evidence-based, data-driven, and result-focused systems. It means ensuring that different colleges, programs and State departments collaborate rather than compete. The first step is gathering, analyzing, and studying the data necessary for effective strategic planning. This data collection is precisely what the REAP Act is designed to do.

Today there is no way to find out what cognitive programming is operational at each correctional facility. Just having an up-to-date resource map would make DPSCS Case Manager and Reentry Coordinator jobs easier, more efficient and more effective. It would revolutionize the way PREPARE and other non-profits guide our clients to success, but the REAP data would do more than that. It would allow community providers to see where the gaps exist in the system and create volunteer programs to fill them. It would allow DPSCS to see where it is investing its limited resources and how well-utilized they are, then make changes to fill classrooms and get people the help they need rather than whatever class is there. It would allow everyone to review results and do more of what works and less of what doesn't.

People who receive an education while incarcerated are 43% less likely to be arrested for another crime,¹ yet in Maryland, incarcerated people simply aren't earning GEDs, and by extension, are not able to access the college programs that have become so prevalent. There are many valid reasons why GED completion has plummeted over the past decades, including teacher shortages, process and eligibility issues that hinder registration or remove students from programming prior to completion, and lack of specialized education for people with learning disabilities, who make up about a quarter of the prison population.² With so many potential problems, it is necessary to study the problem and strategically plan solutions that deliver the greatest increase in service delivery and positive outcomes at the lowest costs. Only data will be able to identify the biggest barriers to GED completion, and only data will inform us on how to best overcome them.

The REAP Act doesn't cost a lot of money, but the data it will produce will allow Maryland to save a lot of money by efficiently delivering the necessary resources and returning productive citizens to the community. The new Administration considered reentry services to be part of Unlocking Opportunity, and truly they are. Over 95% of incarcerated people will return to the community someday, and we have the opportunity to invest wisely in them now and receive a positive contribution from them in return. The data the REAP Act collects is the key.

¹ [Trump Could End Second Chance Pell Grants for Prisoners | The Marshall Project](https://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/03/28/the-uncertain-fate-of-college-in-prison)
<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/03/28/the-uncertain-fate-of-college-in-prison>

² [Disabilities Reported by Prisoners - Survey of Prison Inmates, 2016 \(ojp.gov\)](https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/drpspi16st.pdf)
<https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/drpspi16st.pdf>

2023-03-29 HB 416 (OAG Support in Senate).pdf

Uploaded by: Anthony Brown

Position: FAV

ANTHONY G. BROWN
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March 29, 2023

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

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

RE: HB0416 – Resources and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act

The Office of Attorney General (OAG) urges a favorable report on HB 416, Delegate Amprey's legislation to require the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to assist individuals in its custody in accessing federal Pell grants for higher education. The bill further requires the Maryland Department of Labor (DOL) to set goals for the number of inmates in education programs and to establish tracking systems relating to the number of inmates and their progress in education programs. Finally, HB 416 requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the Department of Human Services to assist DOL in establishing progress-tracking systems.

Providing them with an education is one of the best ways to ensure individuals returning from prison succeed in reentry and avoid recidivism. The return on this educational investment not only benefits the formerly incarcerated, but also taxpayers who would otherwise have to support the incarceration of recidivists. House Bill 416 brings together all of the relevant agencies of State government to provide necessary educational and tracking wrap-around supports for reentrants.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 416.

_HB 416-REAP Act-UULM-MD-Support-Candy Clark- HGO.

Uploaded by: Ashley Egan

Position: FAV



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of HB 416: Resources and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act

TO: Chair Will Smith, Jr and Chair Brian Feldman and the Members of the
Judicial Proceedings and the Education, Energy and the Environment Committees
FROM: Karen “Candy” Clark,
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland Criminal Justice Lead
DATE: March 29, 2023

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry asks for a favorable vote for **HB 416: Resources and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act**. This bill aligns with our first principle; to honor the inherent worth and dignity of all people; which of course includes those behind the prison walls. The intent of prison is to have them successfully reintegrate into their communities after they are released. Yet, after they serve their time, many repeat criminal acts in order to survive and wind up right back where they started. In Maryland, 40% of those released from prison return within three years! The rate keeps climbing with time—at five years it’s 76.6%. Calculating that the average cost to house a prisoner is \$38,000 per year, this is a costly and unproductive outcome.

It is extremely challenging for a returning citizen to successfully reintegrate back into one’s community. Studies have shown that **rehabilitation and education** are the most effective means to lower our recidivism rates. Years ago, our prison systems had a robust educational system involving Pell Grants from the Federal Government. This helped people get decent jobs, so they had a better chance of having sustainable employment after they were released. After Congress banned the Pell Grants for prisons in 1994, the climate became more hostile, and the recidivism rate rose.

In the past, the Abell Foundation’s research of Maryland’s correctional system resulted in a report which advocated for strengthening the correctional educational program. Last year our MGA passed a bill that offered diminution credits for reaching specific educational goals like earning a GED or higher-level course work. It required that peoples’ educational history be kept in records and gave prison teachers a competitive salary to attract more teachers.

Both the Rand and Ford Foundations stress investing in rehabilitation/educational programs for prisoners to ensure a better chance of success. In past years, both the Trump and the Obama administrations invested in pilot educational programs which produced positive results. Consequently, the Federal Department of Education. is expanding the Pell Grant Program to give aid to 64% of Federal and State prisons!

THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY NOT TO BE MISSED. IT’S A WIN-WIN SITUATION.

UULM-MD c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044,

www.uulmmd.org info@uulmmd.org www.facebook.com/uulmmd [www.Twitter.com/uulmmd](https://www.twitter.com/uulmmd)

The Correctional Department is charged to work with the inmates to access Federal Grants in connection with Maryland colleges. The Department will also join with the Department of Human Services to work together to establish correctional rehabilitation and educational programs and engage in a relationship between higher-level Maryland colleges and prisons. Reporting and tracking methods will be included in gathering data which will support accountability.

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry asks your support to honor our returning citizens dignity and worth by Voting Yes for HB 416.

Respectfully submitted

Karen Clark

UULM-MD Criminal Justice Lead

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_HB 416-REAP Act-UULM-MD-Support-Candy Clark- HGO.

Uploaded by: Ashley Egan

Position: FAV



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

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Respectfully submitted

Karen Clark

UULM-MD Criminal Justice Lead

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REAP Act Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Gordon Pack, Jr.

Position: FAV



PREPARE
PREpare for PARole and REentry

February 17, 2023

Re: Testimony in Support of HB0416
Resources and Education for All Prisoners Act

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am a registered voter and returning citizen residing in District #41. I served over four decades for crimes I committed as a fifteen year old. I believe I deserved to be imprisoned and continue to spend every day atoning for my transgressions by working to improve myself and helping others. As a parole advocate for PREPARE, a non-profit providing parole and reentry services for Marylanders, I support the REAP Act.

Educational opportunities were among the things which helped me reform, transition to the greater community, and become a productive, law abiding citizen. In fact, I benefited from the PELL Grant during an era when local colleges and universities had extension programs throughout Md's prison system. I earned an A.A. Degree in Business Administration from, then, the Community College of Baltimore in 1988. Then, I transferred to Morgan State University's program where I accumulated 112 credits towards a B.S. Degree in Business Management.

Unfortunately, before I could complete my degree, the PELL grants were discontinued for prisoners. Needless to say, the federal restriction ended higher education extension programs. I was directly impacted in another way. I have remained an undergraduate for over twenty-nine years. I did not have an opportunity to complete my degree while in the prison system. Furthermore, since so much time has lapsed, I am having difficulty utilizing those credits to complete my degree.

There is a need for DPSCS to establish tracking systems related to prison educational programs and assist incarcerated people in accessing educational grants and establishing goals relating to educational programs. Thus, I ask this Committee to vote favorably for HB0416.

Truly yours,

Gordon R. Pack, Jr.
gordon@prepare-parole.org
gordonrpack@gmail.com
Cell# 410-456-7034

PREPARE
PO Box 16274, Baltimore, MD 21210



PREPARE
PREpare for PArole and REentry

PREPARE
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2023 hb 416 REAP act in senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Kenneth Phelps, Jr.

Position: FAV



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
OF MARYLAND

The Maryland Episcopal
Public Policy
Network

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 416

FAVORABLE

Resources and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act

TO: Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair, Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Co-Chair, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee; and Senator Feldman, Chair, and Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Co-Chair, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Rev. Linda K. Boyd, Co-Chair, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Maryland, Diocese of Maryland

DATE: March 28, 2023:

The Episcopal Church at large and the Diocese of Maryland in particular has embraced the concept of reparations, a concept not limited to financial considerations but to a leveling of the playing field across a broad spectrum of issues, including achieving equity in quality-of-life issues, such as education.

Research shows that correctional education not only significantly reduces recidivism, but also returns five times the amount of money invested. In simple terms RAND concluded that for every \$1 spent on correctional education \$5 is saved on future expenses for corrections. That means that education is one of the most effective weapons we have to not only combat crime but to turn criminals into law-abiding citizens, competent and skilled workers and responsible parents.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a favorable report on HB 416.

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HB 416 amendment 763729.pdf

Uploaded by: Marlon Amprey

Position: FAV



HB0416/763729/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

24 MAR 23
10:03:09

BY: Delegate Amprey

(To be offered in the Judicial Proceedings Committee and the
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 416

(Third Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in lines 5 and 6, in each instance, after “in” insert “certain”; in line 6, strike “and” and substitute a comma; in line 7, after “programs” insert “, and forward certain data to the Maryland Higher Education Commission”; in line 7, strike “requiring” and substitute “authorizing”; in line 8, strike “and the Department of Human Services”; in line 9, after “systems;” insert “establishing the Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission to develop recommendations relating to education and its impact on the criminal justice system;”; and in line 10, strike “resources and education for inmates” and substitute “corrections and public safety”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 2, in line 17, strike “AND”; in line 18, after “COLLEGE” insert “;AND

(9) GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY;

after line 25, insert:

“(B) THIS SECTION APPLIES ONLY WITH RESPECT TO EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN A CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION IN THE DIVISION OF CORRECTION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES.”;

and in line 26, strike “(B)” and substitute “(C)”.

On page 3, in line 4, strike “AND”; in line 7, after “PROGRAM” insert “;AND

(4) FORWARD, AT AN AGREED-ON INTERVAL, THE TRACKING DATA FOR THE NUMBER OF COLLEGE CREDITS THAT EACH INMATE EARNS IN AN APPROVED COLLEGE PROGRAM TO THE MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION”;

in lines 8, 12, and 16, strike “(C)”, “(D)”, and “(E)”, respectively, and substitute “(D)”, “(E)”, and “(F)”, respectively; in line 9, strike “AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES SHALL” and substitute “MAY”; in line 11, strike “(B)” and substitute “(C)”; after line 17, insert:

“SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) There is a Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission.

(b) The Commission consists of the following members:

(1) three members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of the Senate;

(2) three members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(3) the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services, or the Secretary’s designee;

(4) the Secretary of Juvenile Services, or the Secretary’s designee;

(5) the Attorney General, or the Attorney General’s designee;

(6) the Public Defender of Maryland, or the Public Defender’s designee;

(7) a representative of the Maryland Judiciary, appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Maryland;

(8) the Secretary of the Maryland Higher Education Commission, or the Secretary's designee;

(9) the Secretary of Labor, or the Secretary's designee;

(10) the State Superintendent of Schools, or the State Superintendent's designee; and

(11) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

(i) a national expert on correctional education issues;

(ii) a representative of a foundation with expertise in correctional education systems;

(iii) a representative of local law enforcement agencies;

(iv) a representative of the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association;

(v) a representative of an adult prison services provider bureau;

(vi) a representative from a restorative justice organization;

(vii) two individuals who are or were under the supervision of the Division of Correction; and

(viii) any other member with expertise relevant to the work of the Commission.

(Over)

- (c) The Governor shall appoint the chair of the Commission.
- (d) The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services shall provide staff for the Commission.
- (e) A member of the Commission may not receive compensation as a member of the Commission.
- (f) The Commission shall:
 - (1) convene an advisory stakeholder group that includes organizations with experience in:
 - (i) criminal justice policy reform;
 - (ii) advocating for individuals with learning disabilities and those from marginalized communities; or
 - (iii) restorative justice;
 - (2) work with the advisory stakeholder group, including conducting roundtable discussion forums seeking public input in all geographic regions of the State;
 - (3) develop an education-focused statewide framework of policies to invest in strategies to increase public safety and reduce recidivism of adult offenders, using a data-driven approach;
 - (4) research best practices for the primary, secondary, postsecondary, and career or vocational education of those who are subject to the criminal and juvenile justice systems;

(5) identify measures to mitigate risk factors that contribute to adult contact with the criminal justice system, with a focus on education; and

(6) request technical assistance from:

(i) the Abell Foundation;

(ii) the Annie E. Casey Foundation;

(iii) the Council of State Governments;

(iv) the Vera Institute of Justice;

(v) the Coalition on Adult Basic Education;

(vi) the RAND Corporation; and

(vii) other organizations similar to the organizations under items (i) through (vi) of this item.

(g) (1) On or before December 1, 2023, the Commission shall submit an interim report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

(2) On or before June 1, 2024, the Commission shall submit a final report on its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.”;

in line 18, strike “2.” and substitute “3.”; in the same line, after “That” insert “Section 1 of”; and after line 19, insert:

(Over)

“SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, except as provided in Section 3 of this Act, this Act shall take effect June 1, 2023. Section 2 of this Act shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and 1 month and, at the end of June 30, 2025, Section 2 of this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.”.

HB 416 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Marlon Amprey

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 29, 2023

**Testimony of Delegate Marlon Amprey in Support of House Bill 416
Resources and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act**

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings and the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

Our state and nation faces a crisis in the number of incarcerated individuals, and the growing shortage of available talent threatens to hinder economic growth. Our public safety issues around recidivism are directly connected to our inability to holistically support and rehabilitate the incarcerated. House Bill 416 (HB416) works to address our inequitable system by utilizing an all hands on deck approach.

Eighty-three percent of state prisoners released nationwide are rearrested within nine years following their release¹, twenty-seven percent of formerly incarcerated people are unemployed, and twenty-five percent are without a high school diploma, GED or college degree.² Data shows that connecting incarcerated individuals to high-quality educational programming reduces the likelihood of recidivism and increases the likelihood of post-release employment.³

We need HB416 in order to improve the inmate rehabilitation process by increasing incarcerated persons' access to, and facilitating their success in, higher education programs and other social emotional programming. HB416 will require the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to assist inmates in accessing federal Pell Grants by consulting with higher education institutions located in Maryland. Additionally, the Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Education, and the Department of Human Services will be required to work together to set goals for the number of inmates in education programs and establish a tracking system. Further, HB416 establishes a Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission, which will translate the education tracking data into planning, programs, and policies to improve inmate rehabilitation through education.

¹ Wilson, C., & Witter, B. (2020). *The master plan: My journey from life in prison to a life of purpose*. G.P. Putnam's Sons.

² https://www.prisonpolicy.org/research/recidivism_and_reentry/

³ Wilson, C., & Witter, B. (2020). *The master plan: My journey from life in prison to a life of purpose*. G.P. Putnam's Sons.

HB416 can make a huge difference in Maryland, where we have an incarceration rate of 531 per 100,000 people (including prisons, jails, immigration detention, and juvenile justice facilities). To put this number into context, the total United States incarceration rate is 664 per 100,000 people, whereas in the United Kingdom it is only 129 per 100,000.⁴ Maryland has a recidivism rate of roughly 40%, which places it among the top 25% recidivism rates in the country. We can and must do better.

Recidivism is not only troublesome for our communities but it has a negative economic impact on the State. The economic impact of Maryland Correctional Enterprises to the State of Maryland was \$67.3 million in Fiscal Year 2020.⁵ Quality prison programming in tandem with earned credit systems is proven to reduce reincarceration, thus investing in system tracking and increased access to federal Pell Grants will reduce long term costs associated with sentence lengths and reduce recidivism rates.

The evidence is clear: inmates who participate in higher education programs while incarcerated are 28% less likely to recidivate than those who do not. It is critical for the success of inmates as well as the public safety to provide inmates the resources and education needed to successfully rehabilitate and prevent re-incarceration in the future.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote favorably on HB 416.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marlon Amprey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marlon" and last name "Amprey" clearly distinguishable.

Delegate Marlon Amprey
40th Legislative District of Maryland

⁴ <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/MD.html>

⁵ <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/html/criminal.html>

HB 416 REAP MIUCA_FAV_JPR.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Power

Position: FAV

140 South Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Written Support

**Senate Judicial Proceedings and Education, Energy and
the Environment Committees**
House Bill 416 (Amprey) Resources and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act

Matt Power, President

mpower@micua.org

March 29, 2023

On behalf of the member institutions of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) and the 56,000 students we serve, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of [House Bill 416 \(Amprey\) Resources and Education for All Prisons \(REAP\) Act](#). This bill requires the Department of Public Safety and Services (DPSCS) to set goals for the number of inmates in rehabilitation programs, establish a tracking system for the number of inmates in rehabilitation programs, establish a tracking system for the progress of inmates in rehabilitation programs, assist inmates in accessing federal Pell Grants for higher education and adopt regulations to carry out the bill's provisions.

The Second Chance Pell Program, led by DPSCS, offers an opportunity for inmates to receive federal funding to enroll in postsecondary programs at colleges and universities. Maryland is unique in the number of higher education institutions to provide services to incarcerated individuals. The [Goucher College Prison Education Partnership \(GPEP\)](#), founded in 2012, collaborates with DPSCS to offer college courses. GPEP offers a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW) and the Maryland Correctional Institution in Jessup, Maryland. With over a decade of experience, GPEP provided more than 200 college courses to over 300 students with access to more than 100 professors. GPEP participants can complete their studies at the institution or, upon release, transfer their college credits to any accredited college or university in the nation. HB 416 expands the Program to allow more inmates to participate and earn a postsecondary degree. GPEP is eager to build upon its existing relationship with DPSCS and provide educational opportunities to even more incarcerated individuals.

We appreciate the effort that the sponsor has made to improve access for inmates in prisons to pursue higher education. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Irnande Altama, Associate Vice President for Government and Business Affairs, ialtama@micua.org.

***For all of these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for
House Bill 416.***



AFFILIATES



Steurer Senate Testimony HB416 3-29-23.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephen Steurer

Position: FAV

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education, Energy and the Environment - HB416

*Stephen J. Steurer, PhD
Educational Advocate
Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform
sjsteurer@gmail.com
443-474-1196*

We are seeking your favorable support from the Senate for HB0416 (Resources and Education for All Prisons). REAP contains important educational tracking and data collection requirements for incarcerated individuals. We also ask the Senate to include an amendment for a Commission to study the Maryland correctional education delivery system. Why is this amendment important? In the last 20 years there has been a precipitous drop in the number of

incarcerated men and women who enroll in school and attain a high school diploma and/or career vocational certifications for well-paying jobs.

A few administrations ago, in a politically motivated action, the Correctional Education Program was moved from the Maryland State Department of Education to the Department of Labor and Licensing (now the Department of Labor). While there are probably many reasons for the steep drop in program completions, the drop is now a matter of public safety. RAND Corporation research in 2014-2018 has shown education participation significantly reduces recidivism and future crime returning \$5.00 in reduced criminal justice costs for every \$1.00 investment. (1)

Around the year 2000, the Correctional Education Program at MSDE annually produced about 1,000 high school diplomas and over 2,000 career certificates. Under DOL those annual figures dropped significantly after the transfer from MSDE. (2)(3) In 2017, before the COVID crisis, the number of GEDs had fallen to 493 and then in 2018, to 432. By 2019 GED Completions were down to 238. At the height of the COVID crisis, for each year, 2020 and 2021, the number of high school diplomas was ZERO. In 2022, GEDs were back

up to 171. Similar starkly low numbers of completions are true for other education programs such as career certifications.

With the imminent return of Pell grants for incarcerated individuals in 2023 about 10 colleges and universities have been approved by the US Department of Education to provide post-secondary education in Maryland prisons. Unfortunately, the DOL Correctional Education Program has not been preparing enough incarcerated students to meet minimum standards for college entry. A large majority of the approximately 18,000 individuals in Maryland prisons either do not have a high school diploma or have not scored high enough on the national GED exam for college entry. Their reading and math skills are too low to successfully matriculate into post-secondary academic or career technology programs.

We need a Commission to study this massive failure and recommend solutions. Raising the educational and career skills of returning citizens is not only an economic and educational problem but a matter of public safety.

We hope to obtain your support and vote to move this bill forward. The new Governor's office supports the idea of a Commission in HB416. We also have

Strong Schools Maryland and various civil rights groups behind us and hope the Senate will support REAP with this important amendment as well.

References

1. The RAND Corporation conducted the research that proved the connection between education participation while incarcerated and the drop in future recidivism with its 2014 study *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education*. RAND has conducted additional research in 2018 which further confirmed and refined the conclusions of the 2014 study.
2. The 2017 report of the Abell Foundation identifies the untapped potential of correctional education in Maryland to improve criminal justice outcomes. That report, *Prison Education, Maximizing the Potential for Employment and Successful Community Reintegration*, recommended an enhanced incentive system. HB416 encourages an improved planning system and authorizes the creation of just such an incentive system.
3. The 2017 report of the Abell Foundation identifies the untapped potential of correctional education in Maryland to improve criminal justice outcomes. That

report, *Prison Education, Maximizing the Potential for Employment and Successful Community Reintegration*, recommended an enhanced incentive system. HB0294

education testimony.senate JPR.pdf

Uploaded by: Judith Lichtenberg

Position: FWA

HB416: REAP (Resources and Education for All Prisons) Act

To members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

My name is Judith Lichtenberg. I'm professor emerita of philosophy at Georgetown, and I'm on the executive committee of the [Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform](#) (MAJR).

More important for my purposes here, however, is that I've been teaching college courses, tutoring, and mentoring incarcerated people at Jessup since 2016 (and at the DC Jail starting a year or two later). Not to be too dramatic, the experiences I've had there have been life-changing. And this isn't peculiar to me: ask anyone who's taught in prison and they'll likely tell you how the experience transformed them.

Why is that? Several reasons, I think. The men (my students have mostly been men) are incredibly grateful to have the opportunity to study philosophy; they're hungry to learn; they bring experiences your standard undergraduate student doesn't (to say the least). By the time they become my students, they've had a few years (often way more than that) to reflect on what brought them to prison, to grow and change. Many of them came to prison without a high school diploma; they have gotten their GEDs and have come to see the benefits of education, both practical and intrinsic. Rarely do teachers make a difference to the lives of their students in the way prison teachers do.

But I know that as legislators you're also interested in costs and benefits and bottom lines. The evidence is clear: [prison education reduces recidivism rates](#). It's not exactly rocket science: to succeed in the world outside the walls, people need education and job skills. The dismal lack of those is partly what led them down the wrong path in the first place. But the opportunities for education in Maryland's prisons are in short supply. There is a waiting list for the Pell Grant college programs. The Prison Scholars Program at JCI—which offered noncredit but college-level courses—was abruptly shut down when the Pell Grant program started up, despite its quality and popularity. Only a very small proportion of JCI prisoners—about 15 percent—take part in any kind of education program. We desperately need more of them.

The revival of more widely available Pell Grants makes that goal realizable. Ironically, however, the number of GEDs awarded to prisoners has declined shockingly over the last twenty years. GED completion numbers dropped from a high of around 1000 in fiscal year 2000 to fewer than 500 in fiscal year 2017. In 2020 and 2021, during COVID, the number dropped to 0 (ZERO). In 2022 only 173 GEDs were awarded. This decline must be reversed if we want to reduce recidivism and help incarcerated people become productive citizens who can succeed when they come home, as 95 percent of them will.

We need a good grasp of the facts about prison education in Maryland and about the incentives to increase opportunities for it if we are to reduce our prison populations and use

our financial resources wisely. For this purpose the REAP bill recommends the creation of a Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission to investigate how prison education programs are run and to recommend improvements.

As a 2017 [report](#) about prison education in Maryland from the Abell Foundation put it, “lower rates of recidivism and higher rates of employment and engagement are good for business, good for taxpayers, and good for communities.” And for these outcomes prison education and training opportunities are essential tools.

I urge you to give a favorable report to HB416.

Sincerely,

Judith Lichtenberg

Judith Lichtenberg

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HB 416_MD Labor_Letter of Information.docx (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Andrew Fulginiti

Position: INFO

House Bill 416

Date: March 29, 2023
Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Bill Title: Resources and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act
Re: **Letter of Information**

HB 416 updates the Labor and Employment article to require the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) to set goals for the number of inmates enrolled in education programs, establish a system to track an inmate’s progress through educational programming, including the number of college credits that each inmate earns, and to provide marketing for said education programs. While MDL operates the Office of Correctional Education which provides education and career training services to inmates of Maryland State correctional facilities, the Department does not presently track or directly promote programs in the manner required by the bill.

Further, HB 416 cites Correctional Services Article §1–101, which defines “Inmate” as an individual who is actually or constructively detained or confined in a correctional facility, and “Correctional Facility” as a facility that is operated for the purpose of detaining or confining adults who are charged with or found guilty of a crime. MDL has been advised that the bill’s definition extends the Department’s jurisdiction for the identified education activities to all correctional facilities in the State, including facilities where the Department does not currently operate programming (i.e., federal prisons and local detention centers). **The Department estimates the expected cost to promote, track, and set goals for such programming is at least \$521,447 beginning in Fiscal Year 2024.**

While HB 416 does require the Governor to include funding annually for MDL to administer the proposed activities, the bill does not provide a dollar amount, funding formula, or explicit list of educational programs and activities that MDL must promote and track that could be used to determine an appropriation. The Department of Legislative Services notes in the bill’s fiscal analysis that the Attorney General has previously advised that mandatory appropriations must either include an exact dollar figure or a funding formula. Presently HB 416 does not provide either and DLS has expressed that the bill **does not** successfully establish a mandatory appropriation.

Absent a mandatory appropriation and considering the extended scope of the broadened definition of “inmate,” MDL would like to highlight for the Committee that HB 416 will significantly impact the Department and directly increase general fund expenditures beginning in FY24. **The Department does not currently have other State or federal resources available to meet the expected costs of implementing HB 416.**