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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.