



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of Government & Legislative Affairs

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BILL: SENATE BILL 620

POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

EXPLANATION: Senate Bill 620 will require the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to assist incarcerated individuals in accessing federal pell grants. In addition, the bill would require the Department of Labor to establish a tracking system for the number of individuals participating in education programs.

COMMENTS:

- The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services' (Department) Division of Correction operates 13 State correctional facilities housing offenders sentenced to periods of incarceration for 18 months and longer. The Department also oversees five facilities located in Baltimore City that houses pretrial detainees and incarcerated individuals sentenced to incarceration for periods of 18 months and less.
- The Department currently has partnerships with several colleges and universities who were awarded Second Chance Pell Grants, including Goucher College; Georgetown University; Wor-Wic Community College; the University of Baltimore, and Bowie State.
- Additionally, several colleges and universities are currently in the Prison Education Program approval process, such as Anne Arundel Community College, Hagerstown Community College, and the University System of Maryland.
- While the Department of Labor oversees correctional education in partnership with DPSCS, consisting of Adult Basic Education, GED, and occupational programs, post secondary education programs are overseen by the DPSCS Director of Education.
- The Higher Education data required by this bill is already collected by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). As such, the Department can work in partnership with MHEC to establish a tracking system for post secondary education

programs.

- The Department would need to complete programmatic modifications to the Offender Case Management System (OCMS) in order to receive this data from MHEC.
- The total cost to the Department to develop its own separate tracking system would have a significant fiscal impact on the Department in addition to the programmatic modifications to the OCMS in order to capture the data.

CONCLUSION: The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as it deliberates Senate Bill 620.