



Support with Amendments

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment and Finance Committee Senate Bill 620 (Carter) Resources and Education for All Prisons (REAP) Act

Matt Power, President

mpower@micua.org

February 28, 2024

On behalf of the member institutions of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) and the nearly 55,000 students we serve, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of [Senate Bill 620 \(Carter\) 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. SB 620 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, ialtema@micua.org.

***For all of these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for
Senate Bill 620.***