



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of SB0623 – Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission
Finance Committee
On February 29th 2024

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 0623 establishes the Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission that provides our state with recommendations relating to education and its impact on the criminal justice system. The Commission must submit an interim report of its findings which shall include tracking of education rates and levels of incarcerated individuals. All data will be translated into planning, programs, and policies to help improve inmate rehabilitation through education. The commission will consist of members from:

- **The Senate & House of Representatives**
- **Departments of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and Labor**
- **State Superintendent of Schools**
- **State Public Defender's Office**
- **Appointments from the Governor's Office**

The state of Maryland compared to other states has had high recidivism rates despite there being improvements in the states criminal justice system. Maryland has a forty percent recidivism rate indicating that almost half of the offenders who go through Maryland jails and prisons will reoffend. SB0623 will have a huge impact on the growing number of incarcerated people within the state, by promoting rehabilitation that focuses on educational opportunities. Evidence has shown that incarcerated individuals who participate in educational programs are less likely to recidivate than those who do not.

The commission will work with the advisory stakeholder group, including, conducting roundtable discussions forums seeking public input in all geographic regions of the state. The commission will also develop an education-focused statewide framework of policies to invest in strategies to increase public safety and reduce the recidivism rates of adult offenders by using a data-driven approach. Technical assistance will also be requested from several reputable foundations and organizations such as the Abell Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Council of State Governments, RAND Corporation, and many more.

As lawmakers it is important that we establish this commission and advocate for the success of incarcerated individuals in our state. For these reasons I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 0623.

Respectfully,

Senator Jill P. Carter