



Senate Finance Committee

February 29, 2024

Senate Bill 623 - Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission

Support with Amendment

NCADD-Maryland supports Senate Bill 623 with one amendment. Establishing a Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission to develop recommendations relating to education and its impact on the criminal justice system could lead to increased employment and a reduction in recidivism. These factors also play a significant role in people with substance use disorders maintaining recovery.

As reported by the Vera Institute, people engaged in postsecondary education in prison are 48% less likely to recidivate than those who do not and the odds of recidivism decrease as people who are incarcerated achieve higher levels of education.¹ The Brookings Institution also reports that literature has consistently shown that prison education improves post-release employment outcomes.²

According to the Bureau of Justice Assistance in the U.S. Department of Justice, peer support is a proven resource to address challenges related to substance use disorders and mental health conditions in both correctional and community settings to support recovery from, prepare for release, and facilitate reentry.³ As such, NCADD-Maryland asks for an amendment to Senate Bill 623 that adds the experience of peers to the advisory stakeholder group.

Amendment No. 1

On pages 2 and 3:

- (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; ~~and~~
 - (iii) restorative justice; ~~and~~
 - (iv) peer recovery support services.**

(over)

¹ <https://www.vera.org/news/back-to-school-a-common-sense-strategy-to-lower-recidivism>

² Cho, R.M., & Tyler, J.H. (2013). Does prison-based adult basic education improve postrelease outcomes for male prisoners in Florida? *Crime & Delinquency*, 59, 975–1,005; Davis, L.M., Bozick, R., Steele, J.L., Saunders, J., & Miles, J.N.V. (2013). Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs that Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation; Duwe, Grant and Valerie Clark (2014). The effects of prison-based educational programming on recidivism and employment. *The Prison Journal*, 94, 454–478.

³ https://www.cossup.org/Content/Documents/Publications/Altarum_PRSS_in_Correctional_Settings.pdf

Rationale: There is a growing use of certified peer recovery specialists who work with people who are incarcerated. There are also people who are incarcerated who are getting the training to become certified peer recovery specialists. These are effective services and should be better incorporated into carceral and re-entry settings.

With this amendment, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 623.