



PREPARE
PREpare for PARole and REentry

Anne Bocchini Kirsch
Director of Advocacy, PREPARE
anne@prepare-parole.org
(410) 994-6136

HBO209 - Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission - SUPPORT

Maryland currently collects data about correctional education programs. The Department of Labor offers reporting on GED education and vocational training programs, while MHEC and DPSCS have data that will hopefully be merged into a useful report by the REAP Act (HBO416) this year. With the current reinstatement of Pell Grants in correctional settings, this data is becoming even more critical than before if we are to maximize the resources available and give every incarcerated Marylander the chance to leave prison with the education and training necessary to be successful in the community. But data alone is only the foundation - in order for that data to become useful, it must be reviewed, analyzed, and then action must be taken on the findings.

HBO209 begins to build the structure on top of the foundation laid by the current DLR data and the prospective DPSCS/MHEC data from the Pell Grant implementation. First, it collects data about the subject of correctional education that is currently spread across multiple departments and consolidates it. Then, it tasks a specific and diverse group of people with reviewing these important correctional education reports and reaching out to a group of experts for further information. That group will then generate a consolidated report based on their findings to offer guidance to the General Assembly, where necessary changes can be made. While this bill is for a one-time commission, should the findings be useful, I would put forth the idea that perhaps a permanent board might be one positive outcome. However, this bill gives Maryland a chance to see exactly how impactful that analysis may be in planning for our future.

This is a low risk, high reward bill. It costs very little in terms of funding, but has the potential to add a high level of operational efficiency to multiple departments by fostering better communication and offering practical solutions. It will improve services to a vulnerable population that is in critical need of them. It will help Maryland utilize the resources we already have to get more done. And down the road, when people leave prison more prepared, it will make our communities safer.

PREPARE
PO Box 9738 Towson, MD 21284