



Maryland State's Attorneys' Association

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DATE: **January 24, 2025**

BILL NUMBER: **HB 289**

POSITION: **Favorable**

The Maryland State's Attorneys' Association (MSAA) supports HB 289 and urges this Committee to issue a favorable report.

HB 289 establishes a program within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services that would coordinate apprenticeship programs for incarcerated persons. While the bill directly provides for incarcerated persons to work as apprentices during their sentence, the true effect of the bill is to allow these persons to gain skills that will increase their employability once they are released. Reentry services like this are an investment in public safety – research has consistently demonstrated that individuals returning to their communities from incarceration are less likely to reoffend when they are afforded meaningful opportunities. *See, e.g., Philip Cook et al., An Experimental Evaluation of a Comprehensive Employment-Oriented Prisoner Re-entry Program, 31 JOURNAL OF QUANTITATIVE CRIMINOLOGY 355 (2014).* By connecting incarcerated persons with employers during their sentence and providing them with an opportunity to learn key skills and obtain work experience, this bill will help returning citizens overcome one of the most significant barriers they often face upon their release from incarceration: finding employment.

By breaking the cycle of recidivism, reentry programs like the one created in HB 289 directly contribute to public safety by preventing crime, ensuring safer communities and happier families. Any costs associated with this program, and with reentry programs generally, are justified by the exponential benefits that result – these programs pay for themselves when returning citizens are able to successfully reintegrate into society and contribute to their communities. MSAA urges this Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 289.