



January 28, 2025

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
The Honorable , Vice Chair Sandy Bartlett
Committee on Environment and Transportation
100 & 101 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Testimony of Ray Baker, Maryland Director, Baltimore-DC Building Trades
on HB 289: Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services -
Incarcerated Individual Apprenticeship Program
Position: INFORMATIONAL ONLY**

Thank you Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to offer testimony on HB 289.

My name is Ray Baker. I am the Maryland Director of the Baltimore-DC Building Trades (BDCBT). The BDCBT's 28 affiliates represent more than 30,000 union construction workers across Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

BDCBT supports the concept of providing incarcerated individual apprenticeship programs focused on skilled trades, but believes Maryland should conduct a study of best practices from other states before establishing such a program. In particular, we believe Maryland should examine how it could partner with the building trades to deliver state-of-the-art apprenticeship programming for those behind bars. We suggest that the study also determine whether incarcerated individuals could also benefit from pre-apprenticeship programs, and which branch of state government should be responsible for the apprenticeship programs.

Value of Apprenticeship Programs for Incarcerated Individuals

Research from the Center for American Progress suggests that prison education programs, including apprenticeships and other vocational and academic programs, are successful in reducing recidivism and improving inmates' labor market outcomes post-release.¹ For example CAP found that incarcerated individuals who participated in prison education programs were 43 percent less likely to return to prison than those who did not participate. Additionally, those who participated in vocational training programs were almost 30 percent more likely to be employed after release than those who did not receive training.

Apprenticeship programs are characterized by extensive learning on the job under the supervision of an experienced worker and supplemented by some classroom instruction. Apprenticeship programs typically consist of 2,000 hours of on-the-job training along with a recommended minimum 144 hours of classroom instruction annually, according to the DOL. Importantly, apprentices are paid for their time on the job and receive

¹ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/case-paid-apprenticeships-behind-bars/>

incremental wage increases based on time or skills mastery. Upon completion, each apprentice graduates with an industry-issued, nationally recognized credential from the DOL. Research commissioned by the DOL shows that these programs are proven to increase participants' wages and provide job opportunities. Apprenticeships offer the incarcerated population the opportunity to gain valuable skills and a credential that is marketable in the broader labor market. Additionally, apprenticeship programs allow incarcerated individuals to connect with potential employers. Ideally, these programs should help inmate apprentices connect with outside employment opportunities—by partnering with local unions and employers to help connect inmates with jobs prior to release. In addition to the DOL certificate, some apprentice programs offer opportunities for participants to earn industry certifications while incarcerated. In some cases, the programs will award transcripts to apprentices who have completed a certain percentage of their program before release, which can be used with outside employers to demonstrate competency.

California Offers an Example of Best Practices for Apprenticeship for Incarcerated Individuals

The BDCBT suggests that Maryland examine how California has structured its apprenticeship efforts for those in prison, and how the apprenticeship program partners with the state's building trades.² The California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA) Career Technical Education (CTE) program was the first of its kind in the nation to partner an incarcerated individual rehabilitation program with trade unions, non-profit organizations, public entities, and private companies to meet the rehabilitative needs of incarcerated individuals. To date, the CALPIA CTE program is one of the most effective correctional rehabilitation programs in California. By three years after release, only 9.5 percent of CALPIA CTE participants had been returned to custody.

The CALPIA CTE program provides incarcerated individuals productive work and training opportunities in which they receive accredited certifications. The program benefits incarcerated individuals, enhances public safety, and provides savings to the State.

The CALPIA CTE program was established in 2006. The program began as a pre-apprenticeship program with instruction being administered by journeyman instructors under contract from local trade unions representing Carpentry, Construction Labor, and Iron Working. Partnerships include: Northern California Carpenters Regional Council, Construction and General Laborers Local 185, Iron Workers Local 118, Southwest Regional Council Carpenters Local 944, and Southern California Laborers Local 783.

CALPIA's CTE program also includes Commercial Diving, Facilities Maintenance and in 2014, CALPIA added a technology component with Computer-Aided Design (CAD) and Computer Coding (Code.7370).

The BDCBT would be pleased to serve on a state task force or work group to examine how best to structure and deliver a quality apprenticeship program for Maryland's incarcerated individuals. We believe this would be an important first step.

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² <https://www.calpia.ca.gov/workforce-development/career-technical-education-cte/>