

Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform

Working together for a criminal justice system that better serves our communities



Testimony in Support of House Bill 1313 Higher Education—Tuition Exemption—Incarcerated Individuals

On behalf of the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR)

Before the House Appropriations Committee
Hearing 3.11.26 at 1pm

March 9, 2026

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) submits this testimony in strong support of House Bill 13113: Tuition Exemption—Incarcerated Individuals.

MAJR is a nonpartisan, all-volunteer organization of nearly 2,000 Marylanders who advocate for evidence-based legislative and policy reforms to Maryland’s correctional system.

HB 1313 recognizes that education and workforce training are among the most effective tools for reducing recidivism, supporting successful reentry, and promoting long-term public safety. This bill would exempt incarcerated students from paying tuition at public institutions in the state of Maryland, as long as they submit a “timely application for any state or federal student financial aid, other than a student loan,” for which they may qualify.

I have been teaching in the Second Chance Pell Grant Program at Jessup Correctional Institution (and other prisons) for ten years and have seen the overwhelming benefits of higher education to people who are incarcerated. (I also serve on two committees of the PEDRC.) Those in the programs are typically highly motivated people who have overcome adversity and work very hard to grow and ready themselves for a productive life in the community when they are released.

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HB 1313 is one of the recommendations put forward by the Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission (PEDRC), created in 2024 by the Maryland Legislature to improve correctional education and occupational training. MAJR strongly recommends that the House Appropriations Committee give it a favorable report.

Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

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