



**Bowie State University  
Prison Education Program**

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**FAVORABLE REPORT on HOUSE BILL 1313**

Dear Chair and Members of the Maryland Senate Committee:

I write on behalf of Bowie State University's Prison Education Program (BPEP) to express our strong support for House Bill 1313 and to respectfully urge a favorable report. As a historically Black university committed to expanding access to higher education for incarcerated learners in Maryland, Bowie State University has witnessed firsthand the transformative impact that postsecondary education has on students, families, and communities.

House Bill 1313 is an important and necessary measure that would establish a tuition exemption for incarcerated individuals enrolled at public institutions of higher education in Maryland. Under the bill, incarcerated individuals would be exempt from paying tuition, including required fees associated with enrollment, after applying for any eligible state or federal student financial aid other than student loans. Any aid received would first be applied to tuition, and the exemption would cover the remaining difference.

This legislation addresses one of the most significant barriers to expanding higher education in correctional settings: affordability. Incarcerated students often face structural and financial barriers that make access to college difficult, even when they are academically qualified and highly motivated to succeed. By providing a tuition exemption, House Bill 1313 would help ensure that financial hardship does not prevent incarcerated individuals from pursuing educational opportunities that can dramatically improve their futures.

At Bowie State University, we work with incarcerated students who demonstrate resilience, discipline, and a deep commitment to personal and academic growth. We have seen how access to higher education fosters confidence, critical thinking, purpose, and preparation for successful reentry. Educational opportunity during incarceration should not be viewed as a privilege for a few, but as a meaningful public investment in rehabilitation, equity, and public safety.

House Bill 1313 also reflects sound public policy. Access to higher education has long been associated with stronger reentry outcomes and reduced recidivism. When incarcerated individuals earn college credits and degrees, they are better positioned to secure employment, contribute to their communities, and build stable futures upon release. This bill would strengthen prison education efforts across Maryland and affirm the State's commitment to second chances and long-term community well-being.

BPEP strongly supports House Bill 1313 because it promotes fairness, expands educational access, and removes unnecessary financial barriers for incarcerated students seeking to improve their lives. The opportunity to pursue higher education should not be foreclosed because of the inability to pay. This legislation helps create a more just and equitable pathway for incarcerated individuals to access the life-changing benefits of college.

We respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1313.

Thank you for your leadership and your continued commitment to education, justice, and opportunity in Maryland.

*Charles B. Adams*

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