

Gordon Pack

Gpack@prepare-parole.org

410-456-7034

HB 1311 – Higher Education – Student Financial Assistance for Incarcerated Individuals – Alterations – Favorable – March 9, 2026

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am a justice impacted appointee of the Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission. Most of my formal education was acquired behind the walls. I received my GED at the Baltimore City Detention Center at 16. I enrolled in the Coppin State University at the Penitentiary at 17 before getting transferred. I enrolled in the Baltimore City Community College at Patuxent at 21. I would go on to enroll in Morgan State University at Patuxent at 23.

While I served as an academic aide, college clerk and tutor and earned 118 credits, the 1993 suspension of Pell Grants for prisoners thwarted my efforts to earn a Baccalaureate Degree in Business Management while incarcerated. I share this because Federal and State grant funding is critical for reformation and reintegration of incarcerated individuals. Had opportunities for State grant funding existed when Federal grant funding ceased, I could have earned my degree the following semester in 1994. Now, I find myself pursuing a B.S. after I was released 32 years later.

These proposed amendments to the existing law would prevent such tragedies from occurring and assist with the required funding for returning citizens to have a competitive opportunity to obtain gainful employment. Higher education reduces recidivism. Thus, I urge this Honorable Committee to vote favorably for HB1311.

Sincerely yours,

/s/Gordon R. Pack