

**TESTIMONY ON HB 612-
Correctional Education and Workforce Skills Training Programs –
State Correctional Ombudsman and
Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training
Program for Incarcerated Individuals**

**Government, Labor and Elections
February 19, 2026**

FAVORABLE

Submitted by: **Magdalena Tsiongas, MPH**

Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr and members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee:

I, Magdalena Tsiongas, am testifying in support of HB 612. I am submitting this testimony as the family member of an incarcerated person in a Maryland prison, John, and the founder of the MD Second Look Coalition.

Certified Peer Recovery Specialist work is a powerful tool of peer support for incarcerated individuals in recovery. Too many facilities, particularly in Eastern and Western Maryland suffer from a lack of programming overall. And meaningful addiction related and mental health resources are almost nonexistent across facilities. As a result, incarcerated individuals have started the work of supporting each other in recovery while incarcerated through peer recovery. Often times, this can be the only type of recovery support incarcerated people will encounter.

This programming needs sustained funding to ensure it is accessible across facilities. Furthermore, individuals who become CPRS inside have the opportunity to take that skill and transfer it to the community when released, supporting their own reentry with meaningful employment, and supporting the recovery of more individuals in the community. Providing these CRPS compensation for their work while incarcerated and training to support in their future employment in the community through HB 612 is an investment in public safety.

Multiple members of the Second Look Coalition who have been released after decades of incarceration now work in the Peer Recovery space. It is very difficult work, supporting individuals in recovery, but their shared lived experience is an invaluable resource that makes them trusted advisors.

I urge you for a **favorable report** on HB 612.

Thank you.