

Delegates: [Pasteur](#), [Coley](#), [Mireku-North](#), [Phillips](#), and [Young](#),

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB0612. As a justice impacted individual, I did not have the opportunity to participate in the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) program while incarcerated. Because I lacked this training upon release in 2024, several job opportunities passed me by. Without the financial means to immediately pay for the required courses on my own, I have had to delay obtaining my certification until 2026. That delay has directly impacted my ability to secure stable, living wage employment opportunities.

Peer support services provided by individuals with lived experience of incarceration, trauma, and substance use are increasingly recognized as essential to successful recovery and reentry. The CPRS program is not only the sole source of certification for working with incarcerated individuals, but at MCIW it is also one of the very few occupational programs available to women, and the only one that leads to a real world certification connected to sustainable employment in the community.

Making this program a permanent budget line item rather than relying on year-to-year grant funding is vital. The fiscal investment is small, but the long term impact on individuals, families, and public safety is significant.

I respectfully urge you to support HB0612 and ensure that this critical occupational program remains a permanent part of our correctional institutions.

Sincerely,

Ameena Deramous

ameenaderamous@gmail.com

410-703-9601