

Testimony for House Bill 0194
Incarcerated Individuals Apprenticeship Pilot Program
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

By Stephen J. Steurer, PhD, Chair,

Prison Education Delivery System Commission

March 26, 2026

Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today. Please accept my wholehearted support for HB0194 sponsored by Delegate Metzgar and others. Currently, I am the Chair of the Governor's Prison Education Delivery System Reform Commission and have been working very closely with Delegate Metzgar on issues related to the education and workforce development of incarcerated individuals. Because the Commission has been advised by the Governor not to get directly involved with sponsoring bills, my testimony today does not represent the opinion of the Commission per se. In its first year, however, the Commission has created more than 15 recommendations to the Governor and Legislature, some of which are strongly reflected in HB0194.

My support is based on more than 50 years of service working in criminal justice as a high school teacher, correctional administrator in Maryland and the Federal Bureau of Prisons, executive director of a national correctional teacher association, researcher and professor in Maryland. In these roles, I have seen how effectively we can use education and workforce development to train and utilize incarcerated individuals to become productive workers, positively contributing citizens and supportive family members. Many of those who I met behind bars have been released and continued as productive crime-free citizens. Today we have five of those individuals serving on our Commission and workgroups. RAND Corporation research studies have overwhelmingly documented the cost-effectiveness and power of education and workforce development to positively change the lives of individuals and their families and, ultimately, their communities.

In summary, my professional experience and research have taught me the value of education and work skills in redeeming many people who otherwise would have continued as habitual criminals. I am proud to now work with many people who are now parents, productive members of their community, tax-paying citizens and personal friends. Please vote to support apprenticeship in House Bill 0194.