

HB 1311: Higher Education – Student Financial Assistance for Incarcerated Individuals
– Alterations: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE HB 1311** during committee consideration or floor votes.

State financial aid resources are limited and should prioritize students who are not currently incarcerated—particularly low-income, working-class, and middle-class families who pay taxes and struggle to afford college for themselves or their children. **Diverting need-based grant dollars to individuals who are serving sentences for criminal convictions (some for violent or serious offenses) reduces the pool of aid available to law-abiding residents and sends the wrong message about accountability and justice.**

Maryland already offers educational opportunities in prisons through federal Pell Grants (restored in 2023), Second Chance Pell programs, and some state-supported initiatives. Expanding state taxpayer-funded grants to incarcerated individuals—beyond what is already available federally—adds unnecessary costs to the state budget at a time when tuition, housing, health care, and other priorities are straining families and state resources.

Taxpayers should not be required to subsidize college degrees for people who have been convicted of crimes and are still serving their sentences. Rehabilitation is important, but it should not come at the expense of reducing financial aid for law-abiding students who are trying to build better futures outside the criminal justice system.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against HB 1311**.

Thank you for your attention to this important fiscal responsibility, equity, and public safety issue.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals