

Senate Bill 815 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Antonio Hayes

Position: FAV

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Bill: Senate Bill 815

Title: *Correctional Services - Maryland Correctional Enterprises - Report*

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Sponsor: Senator Antonio Hayes

Good afternoon, Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

For the record, I am Senator Antonio Hayes, and I am here to present **Senate Bill 815**. This legislation is a data-driven initiative designed to modernize Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE) and ensure it is effectively fulfilling its mission to prepare incarcerated individuals for successful reentry into society.

Maryland Correctional Enterprises provides critical job training and work experience for inmates. However, to maximize the effectiveness of these programs, we must ensure they are aligned with current best practices and labor market demands. The goal of SB 815 is to identify innovative strategies that can turn MCE into a more powerful engine for reducing recidivism.

SB 815 requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to collaborate with a Maryland institution of higher education to conduct a comprehensive study.

The bill directs the Department to examine correctional industry programs in four specific states: **Maine, Ohio, Kansas, and California**. By analyzing the models used in these diverse jurisdictions, we can identify successful strategies that could be adapted here in Maryland.

Based on this comparative analysis, the Department and its academic partner will be required to make concrete recommendations on how to improve Maryland Correctional Enterprises to achieve better reentry outcomes.

To ensure accountability and timely progress:

- An **interim report** will be due to the Governor and General Assembly by **December 1, 2026**.

- A **final report** with findings and recommendations will be submitted by **December 1, 2027**.

We cannot improve what we do not measure or benchmark. This bill allows us to look outside our own walls, learn from other states, and bring the best ideas back to Maryland to help returning citizens secure employment and avoid returning to the justice system.

The Act will take effect on July 1, 2026, and will sunset after the final report is submitted at the end of 2027.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 815.

Position: Favorable

MAJR testimony for SB815 -2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Lucy Kiekebusch-Steinitz

Position: FAV

Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform

Working together for a criminal justice system that better serves our communities



**Re: Support for SB 815 – Correctional Services – Maryland Correctional Enterprises – Report
March 5, 2026**

Chair and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR), a statewide, all-volunteer organization with more than 2,000 members, I am writing to respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 815.

This bill takes a thoughtful and evidence-based step toward strengthening reentry outcomes by requiring the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), in collaboration with a Maryland institution of higher education, to study correctional industry programs in Maine, Ohio, Kansas, and California and to recommend improvements to Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE).

Work and vocational training during incarceration can be powerful tools for rehabilitation—but only when they are aligned with real labor market opportunities, provide meaningful skill development, and connect directly to post-release employment pathways. SB 815 recognizes that Maryland can and should learn from other states that have modernized their correctional industries to focus on workforce credentials, employer partnerships, and measurable reentry outcomes.

Too often, incarcerated individuals leave prison with limited savings, few recognized credentials, and little connection to employers willing to hire them. By examining models in other jurisdictions and partnering with higher education researchers, Maryland can ensure that MCE programs prepare participants for sustainable employment, reduce recidivism, and strengthen families and communities.

Improving correctional industry programs is not only a matter of fairness and opportunity—it is also sound public policy. When returning citizens secure stable employment, public safety improves, correctional costs decline, and communities benefit from increased economic participation.

MAJR believes SB 815 represents smart governance: study what works, collaborate with experts, and build a system that promotes accountability, dignity, and successful reentry. For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on SB 815.

Sincerely,

Lucy Y. Steinitz, Ph.D.

(on behalf of MAJR. steinitz@me.com/ 443-410-2008)

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Uploaded by: Catherine Kahl

Position: INFO



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JASON DAVIDSON
DIRECTOR

BILL: SENATE BILL 815

POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

EXPLANATION: This bill requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to partner with an institution of higher education for the purpose of providing a comprehensive report on prison industry programs in Maine, Ohio, Kansas and California; and make recommendations on ways to improve Maryland Correctional Enterprises and successful reentry programs.

COMMENTS:

- Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE) provides structured programming for participants by improving interpersonal skills and employability upon release, enhancing safety and security by reducing prison idleness, and producing quality goods and services while remaining a financially self-supporting State agency.
- Programming focuses on enhancing the cognitive skills of participants and affords them the opportunity to learn a trade. More importantly, participants in the program learn the value of teamwork, conflict resolution, time management, adaptability, organization, and many other life skills to help them thrive in both their personal and professional lives.
- MCE encourages education, which is essential for successful reentry. To be eligible for MCE programming, an incarcerated individual must have a high school diploma and be infraction-free. In FY 2025, 1,074 incarcerated individuals participated in an MCE program.
- The MCE CARES (Continuing allocation of Reentry Services) Program provides additional courses and resources to the program participants who are approaching their release dates. The CARES program not only expands on the hard and soft skills that MCE provides, but integrates classes focused on additional skills aimed at providing additional tools, encouraging the motivation for a positive and successful reentry journey.
- Since FY 2024, 1,362 certificates were issued through the Department of Labor and MCE's Skills Training Program.

- MCE continues to be a leader in federal Prison Industry Enhancement Programs (PIECP). This program places offenders in realistic work environments. Currently, the program is available in the MCE Metal Plant. The company that partners with MCE to offer the PIECP program at the Metal Plant has also hired multiple returning citizens who received their training and worked within the PIECP program. MCE continues to pursue other PIECP partners within the community to expand offerings to other locations.
- The required MCE Workgroup, convened in 2024, concluded that participants are overwhelmingly positive about, and highly satisfied, with the programming and reentry services delivered through MCE. The Workgroup provided its findings and recommendations in a final report submitted to the Budget Committees and the House Government and Operations Committee.
- Regarding the comprehensive study mandated by SB 815, MCE remains steadfastly committed to continuous improvement and growth. MCE actively monitors evolving best practices from other state models and is expanding its training initiatives and business units to increase capacity and positively impact as many lives as possible.

CONCLUSION: For these reasons, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests the Committee consider the information as it deliberates on Senate Bill 815.