

Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform

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Testimony in Support of House Bill 438 Adult Prison School Board Model Development Committee

On behalf of the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR)
Before the House Ways and Means Committee and the House Government,
Labor, and Elections Committee (Hearing 2/11 at 1:00 p.m)

February 9, 2026

Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members of the Committees:

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of House Bill 438 – Adult Prison School Board Model Development Committee.

MAJR is a nonpartisan, all-volunteer organization of nearly 2,000 Marylanders who advocate for sensible, evidence-based legislative and policy reforms in Maryland's correctional system.

HB 438 represents a responsible and forward-looking step toward strengthening correctional education in Maryland through thoughtful planning, coordination, and accountability. By establishing the Adult Prison School Board Model Development Committee, the bill recognizes that education is one of the most effective tools for reducing recidivism, supporting successful reentry, and promoting long-term public safety.

Currently, correctional education is fragmented across agencies, funding streams, and governance structures, limiting effectiveness and accountability. HB 438 addresses this by creating a structured, inclusive process to design a coherent school board governance model aligned with statewide educational standards, workforce needs, and public safety priorities.

MAJR especially supports these features of the bill:

- Interagency and cross-sector structure;
- Inclusion of national experts, nonprofit reform organizations, and formerly incarcerated individuals;
- Emphasis on fiscal mapping and sustainable funding;
- Alignment with state educational standards and workforce development goals.

This legislation reflects sound public policy: it is evidence-based, fiscally responsible, and focused on long-term outcomes. Strong correctional education systems improve institutional safety, reduce future

incarceration costs, strengthen workforce participation, and contribute directly to safer communities through lower recidivism.

Close coordination with the Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission in this endeavor is vital, as is a model that brings together postsecondary education (currently coordinated by DPSCS), secondary education and career technology programs (currently provided by DOL), and the training provided by MCE (Maryland Correctional Enterprises). With this in mind, HB 438 can lay the groundwork for a system that treats correctional education as a core youth-development and public safety function, not a peripheral program. For these reasons, the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform respectfully urges the Committees to issue a favorable report on House Bill 438.

Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucy Kiekebusch-Steinitz on behalf of the
Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR)
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