



PREPARE
PREpare for PARole and REentry

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HB0438 - Adult Prison School Board Model Development Committee - SUPPORT

I've had the privilege of serving as a member of the MEJC Education Subcommittee and the Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission Advisory Group as well as other collaborative efforts to improve Maryland's correctional system. I am a formerly incarcerated person and co-founder of PREPARE, where I am part of our three-person executive team. My work has taught me that success is rooted in teamwork, compromise and diversity of experience coupled with solid financial and strategic planning. HB0438 offers all of these strengths as Maryland considers how to best use limited resources to accomplish ambitious goals.

The current Correctional Education system is divided across several Departments. DPSCS handles institutional operations and, in collaboration with university partners, post-secondary education. The operations are divided across DOC, DPDS and DJS, where juveniles charged or convicted as adults are housed until they turn 18. Labor handles occupational programming and, within the DOC facilities, GED, Adult Basic Education, Special Education and English as a Second Language. MSDE handles high school education on a Diploma track at the youth facilities, which is incompatible with the program offered to the adult facilities. For each Department, Correctional Education is only a small part of their mission, and is far from their primary focus. This results in initiatives that are not strategically aligned, money that goes unspent or gets misspent because it is allocated improperly and incarcerated students who are not receiving the excellent educational services that Maryland is known for in other areas.

HB0438 is a huge step to solving this longstanding problem. It convenes a group of experts and stakeholders to develop a mutually agreeable method to come together as a single school board to oversee these currently scattered operations. It conducts a fiscal mapping project so we can fully understand what money exists, how it is being allocated, how much is being lost and what other resources might be available for us to pursue. It then connects the results of this work to the Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission to develop a strategic plan to implement a unified Correctional Education system that can get maximum impact for Maryland's investment.

As a nonprofit director in today's world, I am keenly aware of the need to regularly assess the financial ecosystem and have an agile, living strategic plan. Correctional Education would benefit from the same consideration. I urge a favorable report.

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