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POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: HB 438 - Adult Prison School Board Model Development Committee

FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender

POSITION: Favorable

DATE: February 11, 2026

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender (MOPD) respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 438. House Bill 438 would establish an Adult Prison School Board Model Development Committee to develop a comprehensive plan for a school board system to oversee adult correctional education.

Over the past year, MOPD has been participating in the Prison Delivery Education Reform Commission, specifically as part of the Advisory Stakeholder Group. In 2024, the legislature established the Commission to develop recommendations relating to education and its impact on the criminal justice system. MOPD staff has gained a better understanding of the current delivery of education services in Maryland's adult correctional facilities, and through that process has reviewed data and educational outcomes. Establishing a Committee with the goal of looking at the possibility of establishing a school board system which could address the difficulties and barriers that keep a significant number of individuals, including students with disabilities, from earning a high school diploma through the GED, along with the challenges accessing other education opportunities, is a worthwhile effort and one that MOPD generally supports.

For these reasons, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender urges this Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 438.

Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Government Relations Division.

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