

Support HB 650 – Diminution Credits for Educational Achievement

Encourage academic advancement amongst incarcerated individuals

THE CHALLENGE

- The educational and training systems operating within most correctional institutions are a key component of inmate rehabilitation.
- Maryland's mandatory education law requires inmates serving 18+ month sentences who do not have a diploma to attend classes, but many never complete the program.
- Currently, inmates can earn up to 10 diminution credits per month for being enrolled in an educational program but there is no incentive for making progress or obtaining a GED.

THE SOLUTION

- In order to encourage inmates to work more efficiently, the proposed legislation would establish a 60 day diminution credit bonus to be awarded to those who earn their GED or high school diploma, complete a literacy skills program, post-secondary certificate or degree, or 2- or 4-year college degree.
- Education, specifically obtaining one's GED behind bars, is associated with higher rates of employment after release.
- Studies have shown that inmates who have a GED when released from prison recidivate at a rate that is 7.9% less than inmates overall, meaning fewer victims and more productive members of the community.
- Encouraging inmates to not only participate but complete an educational program is a matter of public safety – replacing criminal behavior with an educational foundation to build confidence and secure legitimate job skills.

MANY OTHER STATES HAVE ADDRESSED THIS ISSUE

- The following states have established diminution credit bonuses for inmates who complete an educational milestone: Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Tennessee.
- According to the Secretary of the Florida Department of Corrections, the increase in inmates earning a GED or vocational certificate behind bars appears to be a factor in Florida's decreased recidivism rates.

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