



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 86 – CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS - CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL - MANDATORY EDUCATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Sponsor – Chair, Finance Committee (By Request – Department of Labor)
January 14, 2021

DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports Senate Bill 86, which increases the mandatory schooling requirement for eligible inmates from 120 calendar days to 240 calendar days. Senate Bill 86 would also bring the minimum correctional education requirements into alignment with those of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The GBC strongly supports enhanced education and job training for individuals within the correctional system, including both the incarcerated and those under supervision in the community. Expanding the educational requirements for inmates will promote better outcomes, including: increased literacy and basic education and employability upon release.

A meta-analytic review of the effectiveness of correctional education conducted by the [RAND Corporation in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance](#) shows a strong positive correlation between correctional education and reduced recidivism. Key findings from their research indicate that, on average:

- *“inmates who participated in correctional education programs had 43 percent lower odds of recidivating than inmates who did not;*
- *inmates who participated in high school/GED programs had a 30 percent lower odds of recidivating than inmates who did not; and*
- *the odds of obtaining employment post-release among inmates who participated in correctional education (either academic or vocational programs) were 13 percent higher than the odds for those who did not”*

This bill is consistent with multiple tenets of the Greater Baltimore Committee’s 2021 Legislative Priorities which include provisions to:

- 1) Strengthen education and workforce systems to prioritize equity, accountability, and alignment with Maryland’s high-growth industry sectors; and
- 2) Improve public safety through enhanced coordination among criminal justice agencies and implementation of comprehensive violence reduction strategies and coordinated re-entry services.
- 3) Increase efforts to implement programs in the criminal justice system that address trauma, addiction, and mental health and provide access to rehabilitative treatment, education, and workforce training.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 86.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 66-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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