



March 09, 2023

**House Appropriations Committee,**  
Chairman, Ben Barnes

**Support for HB1123 –Correctional Services – Maryland Correctional Enterprises – Minimum Wage and Inmate Financial Accounts**

Attention Chairman Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang and members of the committee:

I am writing to express my **support for HB1123 –Correctional Services – Maryland Correctional Enterprises – Minimum Wage and Inmate Financial Accounts.**

This bill will work to assist the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office by aiming to reduce the recidivism rate by offering offenders individualized rehabilitative programming and a minimum wage during incarceration in order to assist them upon their release.

As a prosecutor whose duty is to ensure that public safety is always the #1 focus of my office, I believe that this bill helps empower those who have the unfortunate circumstance of having to spend time behind bars, by providing a minimum wage while incarcerated, helping to acquire financial resources to be successful upon release. Given the realities that the greater percentage of those incarcerated will one day return to the communities that many of us represent, we must be proactive in ensuring their success by putting in place programs and opportunities for them to take advantage of in order to reduce the risk of recidivism.

By paying these men and women a meaningful wage for the hard work being performed during their incarceration, we not only empower the individual convicted of a crime to be successful when they return home, but we also help their family and the community, by providing financial resources that will likely assist in their day-to-day lives, including helping pay any outstanding debt.

Delegate Young's bill ensures that we are paying these individuals a wage worthy of their efforts, some of whom helped moved the furniture into your offices here in the state house. Paying someone \$3 a day for work that would typically cost you hundreds, if not thousands of dollars to produce, is not a standard Maryland should be proud of, and this is an opportunity show those within our communities, that we are willing to pay all Marylanders a fair wage, despite their circumstances.

Beyond just the minimum wage, this bill also recognizes the importance of having these individuals take full advantage of financial literacy and job readiness skills we are willing to offer them. Progress is not just a word to be



used to characterize a certain class of individuals, but rather is an action we must be willing to ensure exists in every facet of our everyday lives, and the passage of this bill will showcase just that.

As an elected representative of constituents who aren't always on the right side of the law, I have a duty to do what I can to assist in their daily growth, including offering rehabilitative services to those who may have broken the law, and to help ensure that they do not reoffend in the future. HB1123 is a bill that will allow our criminal justice system to do just that, offering individualized rehabilitative services and financial guidance and assistance to those who have committed a crime, but are now working towards a brighter future.

I will continue to be vocal in my pursuit of ending gun violence by any means necessary, but that is not a one-way street paved with penalties. We have to begin addressing the root cause of crime, which in most circumstances is the lack of financial means. There is no magic solution to the problems we face, but we have an opportunity to offer alternatives to what we've been doing by supporting common-sense, progressive approaches to public safety like HB1123.

I would urge a favorable vote on this bill, and thank you for your time and consideration. I pray for your continued health and well-being, and I appreciate the service you provide to our great state, along with the level of engagement and commitment you provide to our communities on a daily basis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ivan J. Bates".

Ivan J. Bates, Esq.  
State's Attorney for Baltimore City