

MARLON AMPREY
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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Economic Matters Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Delegate Marlon Amprey in Support of House Bill 209
Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission
March 7, 2024**

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

The state of Maryland has reached crisis rates of recidivism among incarcerated individuals. With forty percent of released individuals re-offending within nine months of their release, our state ranks in the top twenty-five percent of the country for recidivism. The crisis trickles down into our economy as fewer people are available to join the workforce, and more money is spent on our growing 70 million-dollar public safety and correctional services budget. Evidence shows that incarcerated individuals benefit immensely from correctional education, with post-bachelor degree holders having a zero percent recidivism rate. Proper oversight and recommendations for prisoner's education in Maryland are vital to reducing recidivism rates and ensuring the success of these individuals once released.

House Bill 209 establishes a commission that provides our state with recommendations relating to education and its impact on the criminal justice system. The commission will track the education rates and levels of incarcerated individuals and translate the data into planning, programs, and policies to improve inmate rehabilitation through education. The commission will consist of members from:

- The Senate and House of Representatives
- Departments of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and Labor
- State Superintendent of Schools
- State Public Defenders Office
- Appointments from the Governor's Office

HB209 can make a huge difference in Maryland, where we have an incarceration rate of 531 per 100,000 people (including prisons, jails, immigration detention, and juvenile justice facilities). The commission will work with the advisory stakeholder group, including conducting roundtable discussion forums seeking public input in all geographic regions of the State. The commission will develop an education-focused statewide

framework of policies to invest in strategies to increase public safety and reduce the recidivism rates of adult offenders by using a data-driven approach. Technical assistance will be requested from many reputable foundations and organizations such as the Abell Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Council of State Governments, Vera Institute of Justice, and many more.

As lawmakers, we must establish this commission and advocate for the success of incarcerated individuals in our state. With your support for HB209, we can change the lives of millions of juveniles and prisoners in Maryland.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote favorably on HB 209.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marlon Amprey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a distinct "A".

Delegate Marlon Amprey
40th Legislative District of Maryland