



## **HB1414 - Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services - Standards at State Correctional Facilities**

Presented to the Honorable Luke Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

March 6, 2020, 1:00pm

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### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the House Judiciary Committee a **favorable report on HB1414 - Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services - Standards at State Correctional Facilities**, sponsored by Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights and justice. The criminal justice system must place a strong focus on the rehabilitation and reentry of former inmates into society. The goal of providing this population with the resources they need to succeed in society is critical in reducing their reentry. We seek to ensure that former inmates receive the resources critical to helping them transition back into society through programs like relevant job training and educational opportunities. In conjunction with these, programs we advocate for should ensure that inmates are granted the necessary resources they need while they are incarcerated specifically for vulnerable populations, such as pregnant and parenting inmates. Implementing more specific standards on the issues of job training and upholding the rights of inmates can be impactful in their transition back into society and reducing their likelihood of reentry into the criminal justice system.

Job training and skills have been marked as one of the most important indicators in determining if a former inmate will reenter the system. However, it is important to note that job training should be reflective of the diversity of the current Maryland economy coupled with training inmates with relevant skills for occupations in their communities. Currently, the recidivism rate in Maryland is 40.5%.<sup>i</sup> A report by the Abell Foundation found noted that Washington State's job training and employment programs returned \$75 in benefits to the state for each dollar spent.<sup>ii</sup> Investing in programs not only increases the ability for former inmates to reenter society, but investment into these citizens produces economic benefits. A past report by the Maryland Task Force on Prison Reentry, noted that there needed to be a reinvestment in job training opportunities to create and maintain high-quality programs.<sup>iii</sup> Our state must move forward in providing the necessary standards to improve the criminal justice's ability to reduce reentry and recidivism.

The need to further increase employment programs is critical to reducing Maryland's recidivism rate and provide individuals with resources to successfully reintegrate with their communities. For these reasons, **NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a favorable committee report on HB1414.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

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<sup>i</sup> [Peter Leone and Pamela Wruble, "Prison Education: Maximizing the Potential for Employment and Successful Community Reintegration" Abell Foundation, 2017, "Corrections-Based Adult Basic/Secondary Education," Office of Justice Programs, 2014](#)

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<sup>iii</sup> [Task Force on Prisoner Reentry, Final Report on Prisoner Reentry, 2011](#)