

Feb. 6, 2022

Dear Delegate

I am writing to you to ask for your support of HB 0102 Correctional Services – Inmates – Labor, Job Training and Educational Courses.

For too long in the State of Maryland inmates have been paid slave wages to perform work in the various jails and prisons in Maryland. This work includes items that are made for sale for profit by the State of Maryland and a corporation called Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MEC). These items include but are not limited to Furniture, Signs, Apparel, Bed & Bath, Office Supplies, Facility Products and Food Products. In fact, the MCE web site brags about the profit they make on the backs of inmates that are 95% Black. The wages start at \$0.17 per hour.

What makes matters worse the inmates must use these meager wages to pay for food items to supplement the poor meals they are given, haircuts and for outrageous charges for phone calls. In fact, there are many inmates that cannot afford to call their family members the whole time they are in jail or prison.

HB 0102 if passed will provide inmates with a living wage equal to the minimum wage for the State of Maryland which is currently \$12.50 per hour. I strongly urge you to vote for and show your support for HB 0102. It is the humane thing to do.