DAVID GUENTHNER

Productivity Credits Incentivize Participation in Educational and Vocational Programs

House Criminal Justice Committee

MACKINAC CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Support House Bills 4450-4453

Good morning. My name is David Guenthner and I am Vice President of Government Affairs for the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. I appreciate the opportunity to address the productivity credits bill package before you today.

A key premise of the smart-on-crime philosophy is that once someone is found guilty of a crime, a central goal of the justice process should be to ensure that the offender is put on a law-abiding path and the public no longer has to fear being hurt by that person again. Decreasing the repeat crime rate is key to improving the safety of Michigan communities and reducing the amount of tax money we have to spend on incarceration.

Research has shown that equipping an offender for gainful employment quickly upon their release from prison is one of the most effective strategies for reducing repeat criminal behavior.

In January, the Mackinac Center published the largest ever meta-analysis of the highest quality research on education programs in prison. The analysis looked at adult basic education, high school equivalence, workforce training, and college degree programs. All four categories showed positive effects on recidivism rates, employment, and quarterly earnings, and our research was the first to establish a statistically significant return on investment for state spending on these programs.

The productivity credits in HBs 4450-4453 will provide a strong incentive for MDOC inmates to participate in the educational and vocational programming critical for their success after prison.

Productivity credits are a smart on crime approach that will improve public safety, increase our state's skilled workforce, support Michigan's economy, and save taxpayers money. The Mackinac Center encourages legislators to support HBs 4450-4453.

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