

EDUCATION (EDU)

Resolution EDU-24-08

SUPPORTING HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRISONS

WHEREAS, prisons are often dehumanizing spaces for incarcerated citizens, instead of being a place to rehabilitate incarcerated citizens to successfully rejoin society;

WHEREAS, a very small proportion of incarcerated citizens have access to quality higher education in prison programs;

WHEREAS, continued education positively impacts a person's dignity, self-worth, well-being, citizenship, and social bonds;

WHEREAS, education is a core component of effective rehabilitation and re-entry into our communities for incarcerated citizens;

WHEREAS, recent federal legislation has reinstated Pell Grant eligibility for incarcerated people;

WHEREAS, only 35% of state prisons and 4% of higher education institutions provide access to higher education courses;

WHEREAS, students who participate in higher education programs while incarcerated are 43% less likely to recidivate and 13% more likely to gain employment, which in turn lowers long-term costs for the states that implement such programs; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 FAFSA Simplification Act legalized the Second Chance Pell program for incarcerated students enrolled in eligible HEP programs, starting in July 2023.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) urges the legislative bodies of all states to implement a Commission on Higher Education in Prison in an effort to provide and implement recommendations which expand higher education in prison programming;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBSCSL urges the legislative bodies of all states to draft and adopt clear, consistent policies regarding higher education in prison, allowing incarcerated citizens to easily access higher education programming;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBSCSL urges the legislative bodies of all states to implement effective and meaningful data collection policies for higher education in prison programs, including data on student enrollment, completion rates, and program spending;

EDUCATION (EDU)

Resolution EDU-24-08

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges Congress to fully fund and increase the authorization for the Second Chance Act Grants as they help support the successful reentry of incarcerated citizens to our society, and have been shown to save more money than they cost;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials as appropriate.

Resolution ID: EDU-24-08

Sponsored by: Rep. Carol Ammons (IL)

Policy Committee: Education (EDU)