



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
HOUSE BILL 1463 -- CORRECTIONAL SERVICES - INMATES - INTAKE AND RELEASE
REQUIREMENTS (REENTRY SUCCESS ACT OF 2020)

March 6, 2020

DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support

House Bill 1463 requires the Division of Correction to acquire key identification documents—including social security card and birth certificate—for inmates upon intake. The bill would also require the Division of Correction to provide screening and access to mediation services for eligible individuals a year prior to release designed to facilitate reentry. House Bill 1463 would also require the Division of Correction to work with individuals six months prior to release to provide individuals with: (1) a driver’s license or identification card; (2) food supplement benefits, if applicable; (3) medical assistance benefits, if applicable. Upon release, the Division of Correction would provide individuals with: (1) the inmate’s birth certificate and social security card if on file; (2) MTA Transit passes for 90 days of travel; and (3) a one-month supply of any medication prescribed to the inmate.

Each year in Maryland, approximately 36,000 people are incarcerated at a cost of more than \$1 billion per year according to an analysis by the Justice Policy Institute and the Vera Institute of Justice. When these individuals are released from incarceration, they face a myriad of challenges, including a lack of affordable housing, legal challenges, health issues, and the inability to meet basic needs, such as clothing and food. House Bill 1463 would reduce the barriers to successful reentry to society for individuals transitioning from incarceration by facilitating access to key government programs, services, and documentation that is needed to secure employment. Securing meaningful employment is one of the greatest challenges faced by returning citizens, and in many ways, the most important to overcome. According to the Urban Institute’s Justice Policy Center, formerly incarcerated individuals who obtained employment and earned higher wages shortly after their release were far less likely to reoffend during the first year than those who did not.

This bill is consistent with findings of the GBC-led report, *Opening Doors to a Second Chance: Removing Barriers and Cultivating Job Opportunities for Returning Citizens and Job Seekers with a Criminal Background*. This report outlines specific initiatives that employers and elected leaders can take to remove barriers to employment and expand job opportunities for men and women returning to society after incarceration.

Additionally, the GBC’s 2020 Legislative Priorities specifically encourage policymakers to “support evidence-based policies and programs to promote successful re-entry from incarceration and remove barriers to employment.” Promoting successful reentry for justice-involved citizens can reduce recidivism rates, strengthen our workforce, and provide measurable benefits to society.

For the reasons stated above, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report for House Bill 1463.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 65-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.