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**BILL NO.:**           **HB 158**

**TITLE:**               Maryland New Start Act of 2022

**SPONSOR:**         Delegate J. Lewis

**COMMITTEE:**      Ways and Means

**POSITION:**        **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**             January 26, 2022

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 158 – Maryland New Start Act of 2022. This legislation would establish a pilot grant to support entrepreneurship development programs that provide assistance to formerly imprisoned individuals.

Returning citizens have an extremely difficult time securing employment and developing a career after imprisonment. Throughout the country, they face biases against them in the hiring process and may have a more difficult time securing a loan for potential projects. These challenges create barriers for those restarting their life after returning from incarceration. It is imperative we support returning citizens so that they are able to succeed and move forward in their lives.

HB 158 will help to fund programs that support entrepreneurial development for those who were formerly incarcerated. The Maryland New Start Pilot Program established by this legislation will support programs that provide individuals with reentry services and give them the tools to create their own ventures. The fund will also make available loans of up to \$50,000 to individuals in a program funded under HB 158. These services will help ensure the success of returning citizens working to create a successful life.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 158. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at [jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov).