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MAYOR

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HB0488

February 6, 2024

TO: Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 488 – Qualifying Nonprofit Organizations – Training and Reentry Services – Funding

POSITION: Support

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 488.

HB 488 requires the Governor to include \$1,000,000 in the annual budget bill for fiscal years 2026 through 2028 for the purpose of funding automotive repair training for incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals through grants to qualifying nonprofit organizations. These funds are to be administered by the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services.

Baltimore City is disproportionately impacted by mass incarceration; Baltimoreans constitute almost 40% of the state's prison population, and roughly 2,000 individuals return to Baltimore from prison each year. When returning citizens succeed, communities succeed, and Baltimore succeeds. Employment is a crucial component of successful re-entry, along with housing, mental health, education, and community supports.

By allocating resources for job training in automotive repair, this HB 488 takes an important step toward ensuring that incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people are equipped to support their families and carry on meaningful and productive lives. Training and preparation must start prior to release, and the first 10 months after release is crucial. This legislation aligns with the Baltimore City Administration's priority to support returning citizens and preventing recidivism.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 488.