

DALYA ATTAR  
Legislative District 41  
Baltimore City

Environment and Transportation  
Committee



Annapolis Office  
The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 317  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3268 · 301-858-3268  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3268  
Dalya.Attar@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Dear Chairman Davis and esteemed committee colleagues,

I have been a prosecutor in Baltimore City for 7 years. One very important thing that I have believed and continue to believe is we cannot drastically reduce crime by just throwing everyone criminal into jail for a long time. Recidivism rates are high and we must find ways to reduce these rates. I have seen over and over again that when a person is released from jail or prison and cannot find a job, many times that person resorts to crime again. So ensuring we have jobs available and employers who will hire returning citizens is crucial.

Over the years I have spoken with many employers in an effort to increase hiring of returning citizens. I have found the unfortunate trend is that employers feel that training is costly, and they don't see the benefit on their end to hire returning citizens. So first I decided to work on legislation that would give incentives to employers to hire returning citizens. But after spending a lot of time doing research about this I discovered there are already many incentives; however, it is difficult for employers who do not have lawyers and lobbyists on their payroll – like many small and mid-sized businesses – to know what is out there.

So I then decided to sponsor this legislation which is very, very simple and best of all, the fiscal note is zero – this does not have a fiscal effect on the state or local governments.

This bill very simply requires the Maryland Department of Labor to develop a list of any federal and State incentive programs available to an employer who hires and trains formerly incarcerated individuals. This list must be accessible on the main page of the Department's website.

The Department of Labor is supportive of this bill and you should have a letter of support from them.

That's the bill and that's all it requires. It's a very simple bill, but it can go a long way. Incentives are only effective if people know about them. This bill would allow employers to easily see these incentives and the easier something is, the more likely people will take advantage of it.

This bill has potential to be a win-win for all parties involved. The government's incentives can become more effective. Businesses can receive these incentives. And, last but surely not least, more returned citizens can find jobs, recidivism rates can decrease leading to the possibility of crime decreasing.

Thank you for taking the time to hear me out and I ask for a favorable report.