



6240 Old Dobbin Lane ■ Suite 110 ■ Columbia, MD 21045

January 28, 2020

The Honorable Senator William C. Smith, Jr.
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 157 Employers of Ex-Offenders – Liability – Immunity

SUPPORT

Dear Senator Smith:

The Howard County Chamber is a 720-member organization that works to foster a healthy economic climate for businesses and enhanced quality of life for residents. We do this by advocating for policies that spur private investment and employment opportunities. We know that when men and women are gainfully employed, many of our societal ills decrease.

Whether it is stigma, chance of recidivism, workplace risk and/or corporate culture, employers are reluctant to hire ex-offenders. Others are prohibited from hiring ex-offenders by law or contract. While some companies shy away from ex-offenders, there are a host of industries that do not. Yet, these businesses often do not hire non-violent ex-offenders because they believe "their insurance will not permit it." What they really mean is that they are leery of taking the risk of being sued for knowingly hiring an ex-offender. Sadly, no one can blame them, considering our litigious environment. For individuals with a criminal past, the ability to secure employment has proven to be extremely difficult. This ultimately leads to an unstable environment filled with limited job options.

In reviewing SB 311, the Howard County Chamber believes we have an opportunity to truly assist those men and women who have paid their debts and would like to contribute positively to society if given the chance. We are pleased to see this bill eliminate the risk to certain important employers for knowingly hiring ex-offenders. For the reasons stated above, we request a "Favorable Vote" on SB 311.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Leonardo McClarty'.

Leonardo McClarty, CCE
President/CEO, Howard County Chamber

CC: Senator Bob Cassilly