

To: **Judicial Proceedings**

From: Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake, Inc.

Bill: Employers of Ex-Offenders – Liability for Negligent Hiring or Inadequate Supervision - Immunity

Re: **Letter of Support**

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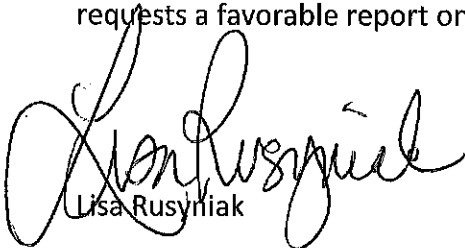
**Senate Bill 157** establishes that employers in certain industries may not be held liable for negligently hiring or failing to adequately supervise an employee based solely on an employee's criminal record. By reducing the liability exposure for employers that choose to hire individuals with criminal records, **Senate Bill 157** will reduce recidivism, promote re-entry, and benefit Maryland's economy.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), approximately 77 million Americans, 1 in 3 adults, have a criminal record.<sup>1</sup> Many individuals with a criminal record face significant barriers to employment when attempting to re-enter the workforce. These barriers to the workforce cost the U.S. between \$78 and \$87 billion in annual GDP.<sup>2</sup>

The liability imposed on businesses by current Maryland law reduces the chances of employment for many individuals with a criminal record. These individuals have served their sentence, are ready to contribute to society, and are actively seeking employment in Maryland. By removing the legal liability connected to employment of individuals with criminal records, Maryland will promote economic stability for individuals with criminal records and the families they seek to support.

**Senate Bill 157** limits removal of liability to select industries, including manufacturing, warehousing, *new* construction, shipping and receiving (excluding work requiring the operation of vehicle on a street or public highway), and rehabilitation or demolition of *unoccupied* structures. These are in-demand industries that are currently experiencing a workforce shortage within Maryland. This bill will simultaneously connect individuals returning from incarceration to gainful employment and increase the potential workforce for employers.

**Senate Bill 157** removes a significant barrier to employment, reduces the chance of recidivism, and benefits Maryland's economy. For these reasons, **Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake** respectfully requests a favorable report on **Senate Bill 157**.



Lisa Rusyniak

President & CEO

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/barriers-to-work-individuals-with-criminal-records.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <http://cepr.net/images/stories/reports/employment-prisoners-felonies-2016-06.pdf>