

EQUITY FOR ALL KIDS



To: Judicial Proceedings Committee
From: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, Executive Director
Re: SB858, Procurement and Correctional Facilities - Employment Opportunities for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals
Date: February 26, 2020
Position: Support

Advocates for Children and Youth supports SB 858, which would promote hiring of individuals returning to their communities by companies seeking State contracts.

This legislation would have a significant impact on youth. In 2019 Maryland arrested 21,417 youth. Black youth are arrested at 3 times the rate of white youth, and the majority of their charges are misdemeanors; 58.9% of youth in out-of-home placement are there for misdemeanors, primarily misdemeanor assault and misdemeanor theft. In addition, Maryland has the largest incarcerated African American emerging adult population – those 18 to 24 – in the country.

We know that economic factors influence, and often drive, recidivism. For youth or emerging adults who enter the justice system, their ability to complete their education and launch their careers are interrupted if not halted completely. Upon release, youth are less likely to re-enroll into school and struggle to find employment. Providing jobs for these youth or emerging adults upon their return to their communities is critical for supporting them into a more secure, sustainable trajectory.

A 2015 study by the Manhattan Institute showed how much impact employment has on recidivism. The study found that employment reduces recidivism by as much as 20% for non-violent offenders. Interestingly, the report also found that the sooner ex-offenders are employed, the less likely they will commit future crimes.¹

Supporting our youth and emerging adults into stable economic pathways is critical for their success. ACY supports SB 858 and urges a favorable vote.

¹ https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2015/06/11/immediate_access_to_employment_reduces_recidivism_126939.html