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Judicial Proceedings Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024

The Maryland State Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
2 East Miller Senate Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: Senate Bill 1036: *Task Force on the Creation of a Division of Returning Citizens and Expanded Re-entry Services - Establishment***

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee,

By now, an acute observer might have noticed a recurring theme with my bills this session: the preemption of criminality and the prevention of repeat offenses. Senate Bill 1036 falls into the latter category.

This bill establishes the Task Force on the Creation of a Division of Returning Citizens and Expanded Re-entry Services to focus on state prisoners who are scheduled to be released from prison or who have recently been released from prison. The Task Force will be responsible for assessing measures of re-entry success, coordinating existing department and community re-entry programs, removing barriers to re-entry, and connecting incarcerated individuals with pre and post release assistance.

More specifically, the Task Force will identify and assess the current re-entry services that exist in the State, including gaps that currently exist, assess the markers of successful re-entry and develop a plan to establish a permanent Division of Returning Citizens within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

The Task Force will also establish a plan to expand housing, transportation, employment, social services, healthcare, education, and legal services to individuals who have just been released from incarceration. The housing plan will render necessary assistance in finding halfway houses, family homes or apartments for released prisoners. The employment plan will render necessary assistance in finding employment for released prisoners, including assistance in obtaining vital documents and in preparing resumes. The health services plan will render necessary assistance in finding healthcare providers, mental health services, substance abuse counseling and the like. The education plan will render assistance in connecting to GED programs and postsecondary education, as needed.

The bill gives the Task Force 18 months to complete its work, requiring its report to be submitted by December 31, 2025.

In conclusion, it is simply intuitive that it is counterproductive to both justice and the public safety of the state if we do not give released individuals the tools that they need to maximize their chances of succeeding once they are no longer behind bars. This is the best way to prevent recidivism.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of Senate Bill 1036 and will be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.