

CHARLES E. SYDNOR III, ESQ.
Legislative District 44
Baltimore County

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judicial Proceedings Committee
Executive Nominations Committee

Joint Committees

Administrative, Executive, and
Legislative Review

Children, Youth, and Families

Senate Chair, Legislative Ethics

Chair

Baltimore County Senate Delegation



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 216
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3612 · 301-858-3612
800-492-7122 Ext. 3612
Charles.Sydnor@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony for SB 187
Correctional Services—Inmate Employment—Agricultural Work
February 7, 2024

Good afternoon, Chair Smith, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Senate Bill 187 (“SB 187”) reintroduces 2023 House Bill 747 which passed the House with a 131—4 vote and unfortunately, due to time constraints, did not make it out of this committee. SB 187 repeals § 9-515 of our Code’s Correctional Services Article, which authorizes incarcerated individuals to harvest crops at camps in Queen Anne’s or other counties, in its entirety. Something that should have been done long ago.

The first iteration of this law, enacted in 1916, allowed incarcerated individuals to work “on the public roads and highways” of the state.¹ Then, in 1943 this body, repealed and re-enacted this law, to continue authorizing incarcerated individuals to perform work on roadways, and authorized the Board of Corrections to arrange for incarcerated individuals to work at camps, namely in Queen Anne’s County, to harvest crops from August 1st through November 30th each year.² Finally, in 1999, the Correctional Services Article Review Committee noted that the “General Assembly may wish to repeal this section as obsolete,” as no camps existed in Queen Anne’s County, and no incarcerated individuals were being used in agricultural work as authorized by this section. Further, on Wednesday January 24, 2024, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections confirmed via email that these camps no longer exist.

As § 9-515 of our Code’s Correctional Services Article, is an antiquated law, I respectfully urge the Committee to vote in favor of SB 187.

¹ See Md. Code Ann., § 211(1916).

² See Md. Code Ann., § 720 (1943).