



### **INFORMATIONAL TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 482:**

**TO:** Hon. Pam Beidle, Chair, and members of the Senate Finance Committee

**FROM:** Christopher Dews, Policy Consultant

**DATE:** March 19th, 2025

Out of Justice (OFJ) is an organization comprised of individuals directly and indirectly impacted by the criminal legal system. We advocate for reforming policies and practices that adversely affect successful reintegration into society. OFJ requests an amendment to House Bill 482 to reduce barriers to occupational licensing for returning citizens.

In 2019, Out for Justice and the Job Opportunities Task Force supported [House Bill 22: Occupational Licenses or Certificates – Application Determinations – Use of Criminal History](#), which stated that a Department should not deny an occupational license or certificate to an applicant solely based on a previous conviction if:

- The applicant has served their entire sentence, including imprisonment, mandatory supervision, probation, and parole,
- An *additional seven* years have passed since the applicant's release *without* recidivism and
- The crime was a *non-violent* and *non-sex-related* offense.

This bill took years to pass with consistent and aggressive advocacy. Thanks to the sponsorship of then-Delegate Charles Sydnor, it crossed the finish line during the 2019 legislative session.

House Bill 482 accidentally erases this provision from the statute as the bill was initially part of [Senate Bill 54/ House Bill 175](#) of 2024, which sought to reduce the window from seven (7) years to three (3) ([pg 2, lines 25-27 / pg. 3, lines 1-4](#)). There was *no* intention in last year's bills or House Bill 482 to erase this provision and reinstate massive restrictions for licensing access to Marylanders who have completed their sentences, reacclimated into society, and want to support themselves and their families through a trade. With this context, Out for Justice suggests that the committee strike the brackets from page 3, lines 8 and 16, as follows:

[House Bill 482](#): Page 3, Lines 8-16

8 (f) (1) **(I)** This subsection does not apply to a conviction of a crime for

9 which registration on the sex offender registry is required under Title 11, Subtitle 7 of this  
10 article.

11 (2) If a period of 7 years or more has passed since an applicant completed



12 serving the sentence for a crime, including all imprisonment, mandatory supervision,  
13 probation, and parole, and the applicant has not been charged with another crime other  
14 than a minor traffic violation, as defined in § 10–101 of this article, during that time, a  
15 department may not deny an occupational license or certificate to the applicant solely on  
16 the basis that the applicant was previously convicted of the crime.

This textual change is mandatory and *aligns with the sponsor's intent* to support employment access for returning citizens. Thank you for your consideration on these matters.

We respectfully urge that you move favorably on this amendment.