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House Environment & Transportation Committee

March 6, 2020

House Bill 1553

Identification Cards and Driver's License Renewals – Inmates Support

The Baltimore City Substance Abuse Director (BSCAD) is an advocacy and provider organization comprised of 30 Baltimore City substance use disorders treatment providers representing all levels of care from prevention to residential treatment. Our mission is the promotion of high-quality, best-practice and effective substance use disorders treatment for the citizens of Baltimore City.

BCSAD supports House Bill 1553. The lack of state-issued identification cards is one of the biggest barriers faced by clients served by substance use disorder treatment programs throughout Baltimore City. The lack of IDs prevents people from accessing a whole range of necessities, including applying for state and federal benefits, obtaining housing, and getting a job. Treatment programs spend a great deal of time with our clients helping them through the process of getting IDs so they can strengthen their stability and maintain recovery.

Given the intersection of substance use disorders and the criminal justice system, there are many people who visit our programs who have come from a state prison or local detention center. If the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services ensured people had valid IDs when they return to their communities, they would not only be supporting people in treatment and recovery, they would also be supporting successful re-entry which is proven to reduce recidivism.

For these reasons, BCSAD requests a favorable report on **HB 1553**.

Joan Sperlein, President
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