
Kimberly Haven

March 10, 2020

Chairwoman Pendergrass
Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk
Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

HB 1524 – Procurement and Correctional Facilities – Employment
Opportunities for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

Position: SUPPORT

My name is Kimberly Haven and I am in support of HB 1524.

As one of the leading criminal justice advocates in our State, I urge this committee to support this legislation.

Trying to find employment can be difficult at times – for those who are currently incarcerated it is almost impossible – for those who have returned to the community, it is made even more difficult by having to check the box on applications.

HB 1524 is a tremendous step in the effort to address one of the biggest barriers facing individuals who are returning to our communities from incarceration – employment. This legislation will position the State as a leader in the effort to assist the reentry process by encouraging and mandating that employers who contract with the State to make opportunities available to formerly incarcerated individuals.

The implementation of this legislation sends the message to those who wish to contract with the State, that we believe that our formerly incarcerated citizens are an untapped work force. It provides a means of reporting to the State, the efforts of contractors to make these opportunities available.

While incarcerated, individuals are limited in their ability to search out employment as they prepare for release. The Maryland Workforce Exchange is the one site that they are able to access and to apply to jobs through. For those preparing to return home, to be able to set up a profile through the exchange that only covered contractors can access is a tremendous step in leveling the employment field.

For these reasons and others, I urge a favorable report on HB 1524.