



March 10, 2020

Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair
House Health and Government Operations
Committee, Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Subject: FAVORABLE – HB – 1524/SB-858 – Procurement and Correctional Facilities -
Employment Opportunities for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Committee:

According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), 67.8% of released state prisoners were arrested for a new crime within three years, and 76.7% were arrested within five years (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014). Reducing recidivism not only protects society at large, but also improves the life quality of individual ex-prisoners. Employment has long been recognized as having a negative correlation with crime (Uggen, 1999; Uggen et al., 2005).

However, Returned Citizens face tremendous difficulties in obtaining employment opportunities post-release. Such a disadvantaged situation may be attributable to multiple reasons. However, HB-1524 the Returned Citizen Job Opportunity Bill is supported by a strong commitment by Maryland's four (4) HBCU's, Morgan State University, Bowie State University, Coppin State University and University of Maryland Eastern Shore who are committed to addressing the work ready barriers that may contribute to employment difficulties for Returned Citizens. While these universities will do their best to offer a range of educational programs that are driven by market demand, at the end of the day, Returned Citizens need employers ready to hire. Education and training is not enough along. Therefore, HB-1524/SB-858 incentive program that encourages contractors with the DPCS, who have the most to gain, is critical to the successful re-entry of Returned Citizens.

Therefore, I urge a favorable report on HB-1524/SB858.

Sincerely,

Nicole Hansen

Nicole Hansen
Executive Director