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Budget and Taxation Committee

Capital Budget Subcommittee

Health and Human Services Subcommittee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Vote Yes on Senate Bill SB 574

Bill Title: District Court - Jobs Court Pilot Program

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair, and committee members, I am here today to urge a favorable report on **SB 574**.

I have here with me today, District Court of Maryland Chief Judge John Morrissey and District Court Judge Pastore of Baltimore City. Also with us today is Mr. Maurice Way. Mr. Way is a graduate of what I think you will agree is a very promising project in Baltimore City.

Judge Pastore started the District Court Re-Entry Project in 2016 to address the most pervasive obstacle facing individuals with criminal records: the ability to obtain meaningful employment.

Finding long-term employment with a regular income allows these individuals to become stable and productive members of our communities and, not surprisingly, they become much less likely to reoffend.

Participants in the program are offered educational opportunities, job training, and job placement. They can train in a variety of skills from catering to construction. Participants can learn to operate a mix of machinery from computers, to forklifts, to drones. They can find careers in auto repair, and the sustainable energy, maritime and culinary industries.

In the first 6 months of the program, over 50 individuals enrolled. As of 2020, over 364 individuals have been enrolled. Individuals come to the program through a variety of court referrals, dismissed cases and even civil proceedings. Some as an alternative to incarceration, a condition of probation, or pursuant to pre-trial supervision.

I will let the judges give you the nuts of bolts of how the program works but I am enthusiastic about the future of this important program and the possibility of duplicating it throughout the state. The purpose of SB574 is to do just that.

I do offer a clarifying amendment which I worked out with the Judiciary that removes the funding for the Administrative Office of the Courts and makes Judge Pastore's program the pilot and model for the state. I urge your favorable report on the amended bill and now I will turn it over to my panel.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cory V. McCray'.

Cory V. McCray
State Senator