



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 977 – CORRECTIONAL SERVICES - STEP-DOWN PROGRAMS - CAUSE OF ACTION

Sponsor: Senator Lee

March 30, 2022

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

Senate Bill 977 would provide an individualized “step-down” program for an incarcerated individual about to be released into the community and incarcerated individuals in restrictive housing about to be transferred to the general population. The step-down program is a system of review with established criteria that prepares an inmate for transition to the general population or the community that is individualized to the needs of the inmate and uses a coordinated, multidisciplinary treatment team approach. The multidisciplinary treatment team may include psychologists, psychiatric practitioners, licensed social workers, licensed mental health counselors, registered nurses, activity therapists, and correctional staff.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports this legislation. One of the key reasons for recidivism among formerly incarcerated individuals is the lack of access to resources to help them transition to the general population. Senate Bill 977 provides the resources to support their mental and physical health during their transition, thereby increasing their chances of being productive and contributing members to Maryland’s society and workforce. Maryland’s economic potential is predicated upon the maximization of its workforce capabilities; supplying former incarcerated citizens with the mental health resources to help their transition into the general population is part of that process.

The GBC has long supported evidence-based policies and programs to promote successful re-entry from incarceration and remove barriers to employment, including restrictions on access to education and training grants and scholarships, professional and occupational licenses, and housing.

The GBC contends that this bill will help maximize Maryland’s workforce potential by providing individuals with the necessary mental health resources and wraparound services to help them re-enter the workforce.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 977.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

111 South Calvert Street • Suite 1700 • Baltimore, Maryland • 21202-6180

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org