



**Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
Office of the Secretary**

6852 4th Street, Sykesville, Maryland 21784
(410) 339-5000 – TOLL FREE 877-379-8636 • www.dpscs.maryland.gov

STATE OF MARYLAND

LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
LT. GOVERNOR

ROBERT L. GREEN
SECRETARY

RACHEL SESSA
CHIEF OF STAFF

SASHA VAZQUEZ-GONZALEZ
ACTING
DEPUTY SECRETARY
ADMINISTRATION

WAYNE HILL
DEPUTY SECRETARY
OPERATIONS

CAROLYN J. SCRUGGS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

GARY W. McLHINNEY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

BILL: SENATE BILL 554

POSITION: LETTER OF SUPPORT

EXPLANATION: This bill will establish the Maryland New Start Pilot Program in the Department of Commerce to provide multi-year grants to organizations to create or support entrepreneurship development programs to provide assistance to formerly incarcerated individuals. The bill also establishes the Maryland New Start Pilot Program Fund, and will require the Governor to provide funding in the annual budget.

COMMENTS:

- The Senate passed this bill with amendments and the Department supports the bill in its current posture. As amended, the bill was changed to a grant program that is administered by the Department of Labor. It also establishes a Microloan Program in the Department of Commerce. Furthermore, it defines a “covered individual” who is eligible for the New Start Grant Program
- The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Department) oversees the Division of Correction which operates 13 State correctional facilities, housing offenders sentenced to periods of incarceration for 18 months and longer. The Department also oversees the Division of Pretrial Detention and Services which operates the Baltimore City Pretrial Complex. The Department does not oversee any other local jail or detention facility.
- The Department of Labor (Labor) provides education, vocational training, and occupational opportunities to incarcerated individuals throughout the Department’s Division of Correction. These programs are incredibly important as education and linkage to sustainable employment are key factors in reducing recidivism.

- In addition to the occupational skills learned within the Division of Correction, several incarcerated individuals already possess skills that may transfer to entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Recognizing the potential to increase entrepreneurship opportunities, Labor will begin offering entrepreneurship training courses in February 2022 at two prisons in Jessup; the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women and the Dorsey Run Correctional Facility. These courses will include such topics as business strategies and financial planning.
- The Maryland New Start Pilot Program would serve as another re-entry resource for formerly incarcerated individuals by providing them with resources to create or support entrepreneurship development programs. Unlike the Department of Commerce, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services does not have the ability to provide grants or loans to support entrepreneurship development programs.
- It is vital that local communities and businesses engage with formerly incarcerated individuals and provide the essential resources and services necessary to ensure their success in the community.
- As such, the Department is supportive of the bill as it passed the Senate.

CONCLUSION: For these reasons, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests the Committee to vote **FAVORABLE** on Senate Bill 554 as amended.