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BILL NO.: **HB 1022**

TITLE: Labor and Employment – Postconviction Work Readiness Program

SPONSOR: Delegate Young

COMMITTEE: Judiciary

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 7, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1022 – Labor and Employment – Postconviction Work Readiness Program. This legislation would establish the Postconviction Work Readiness Program, providing services to individuals who have been convicted of a felony to assist in obtaining and retaining employment.

As individuals convicted with a felony seek to reengage with their communities, they can face many challenges, including difficulty finding and retaining employment. Many lack appropriate training or skills and therefore, few options for reentering the workforce. Recidivism rates climb to their highest among residents who are unable to find steady income. It is crucial that the State of Maryland supports working-age returning citizens, a population that is disproportionately made up of those that come from lower-income backgrounds and people of color, with reentering the workforce.

The program established by House Bill 1022 would assist individuals who have been convicted of a felony in obtaining employment, by encouraging employers to hire returning citizens and provide job training and placement services. HB 1022 serves as a critical tool for enhancing Maryland’s workforce and supporting a marginalized community by providing much needed resources, while also closing the revolving door in state and local justice systems.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 1022. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.