



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**BILL:** House Bill 464 - Prince George's County – Prince George's County Reentry Employment Incentive Program – Funding

**SPONSOR:** Delegate J. Lewis, *et al.*

**HEARING DATE:** February 14, 2023

**COMMITTEE:** Appropriations

**CONTACT:** Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

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**POSITION:** SUPPORT

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The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House 464 - Prince George's County – Prince George's County Reentry Employment Incentive Program – Funding**, which requires the Governor to include an appropriation of \$500,000 in the annual budget bill for the Prince George's County Reentry Employment Incentive Program. The mandated appropriation applies in fiscal 2025 through 2028 and must be used to supplement, but not supplant money appropriated to the county program.

Prince George's County has the second highest number of citizens returning from incarceration in the State of Maryland. National studies have shown that steady employment of formerly incarcerated individuals helps to reduce rates of recidivism, gives those citizens a promising path back into society, and creates overall economic and social benefits for the community.

The Prince George's County Reentry Employment Incentive Program encourages County-based employers to hire returning citizens by providing businesses with financial assistance by supplementing a portion of a new employee's salary through reimbursement and decreases the amount of unemployed formerly incarcerated residents.

Specifically, an individual qualifies to participate in the program if they have been confined for a total of six months within the past five years. Employers qualify if they are a commercial or nonprofit entity that conducts business in Prince George's County and agree to the terms of the program. Participants then must work a minimum of 21 hours each week and be paid a minimum of \$15 per hour, resulting in employers being reimbursed \$5 per hour for up to 40 hours per week.

This provides returning citizens with opportunities to work for Prince George's County organizations that can provide needed work experience while earning a competitive wage. Additionally, it helps businesses fill vacancies within their organization while being financially supported by Prince George's County. Finally, the program strengthens the local reentry ecosystem by demonstrating that returning citizens can positively contribute to the community; encouraging others to be more willing to give them a second chance. This bill will match the funds the County currently spends on the program, doubling the program's budget and its potential effectiveness.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 464** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.