



**PREPARE**  
PREpare for PARole and REentry

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### **SBO499 - Workgroup to Study Reentry - Support With Amendment**

In my work as Director of Advocacy for PREPARE, a non-profit organization with the mission to support incarcerated people in making their best case for parole and having a successful transition back to the community, I understand the critical need for reentry resources that are strong, organized and efficient. This is a new and growing community that serves an incredibly important function in our society. Over 95% of people who are currently incarcerated will return to the community, and when they return with the support and education they need to become productive citizens, everyone wins.

In my work, I've found that the best results come from the best communication and collaboration. When DPSCS, other State departments such as DLR and MDH, community organizations, families, and the impacted individuals work together toward the common goal of rehabilitation and successful reentry we can build the positive outcomes that improve public safety and allow returning citizens to really engage and even give back to the community with their lived experience. But with so many people and organizations building at once to meet a growing need, the question then becomes how do we foster that needed communication. SBO499 creates the table where we can come to sit, strategize and organize the reentry community. It is a space where we can learn from each other's mistakes and come up with creative solutions together.

The amendment, which has been submitted by Senator West's office, brings the right people to the table. In order to do the work that this workgroup must, we need people with actual experience in the field - people who have created reentry solutions for different populations and know firsthand what the challenges are, where the gaps need to be filled, and how to get things done in the real world. We need people who know how to work with men, women, and people suffering from mental health concerns and substance use disorder. We need to put housing first and make sure everyone that leaves a correctional institution has a bed to sleep in that night. We need people from DPSCS who work front line in reentry and community supervision that can tell us what

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challenges they face and how we can help, and people from the non-profit community who can design and seek funding for solutions.

As one link in this newly forming chain of supportive services for incarcerated and returning individuals, I am excited to be a part of this growth. I look forward to the opportunity to learn from other organizations that have seen the problem from a different viewpoint and working together to achieve success I'm sure I can't imagine on my own. When this group is formed, the whole will be much greater than the sum of its parts, and all of Maryland will benefit. I urge you to support HBO499 with the amendments.

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