



HOUSE BILL 0877

Correctional Services-Incarcerated Individuals-Intake and Release (Re-entry Success Act)

RICH GIBSON, HOWARD COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

POSITION: FAVORABLE FOR HB 0877

March 3, 2023

My name is Rich Gibson, I am the State's Attorney for Howard County and the President of the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association (hereinafter MSA). I have been a prosecutor for nineteen years and I am writing today to request a favorable report for House Bill 0877.

The overwhelming majority of defendants that are incarcerated will rejoin society at some point in the future. It is in the best interest of public safety and our society that we support and invest in policies and programs that will increase the odds of a successful reentry. House Bill 0877 seeks to address gaps in the existing support structure for returning individuals.

House Bill 0877 provides a pathway for mediation and reconciliation between incarcerated individuals and members of the community who may be supportive when they are released. Critically important is that this bill does not compromise victims in its desire to care for the incarcerated. Those essential protections stated in section (A)(2) of the bill appropriately balance the need to protect victims and witnesses from unwanted, potentially traumatic, interactions with the desired goal of reconnecting returning individuals to social support structures in the public.

Furthermore, House Bill 0877, if enacted, will require 6 months prior to release, that the Division of Corrections (hereafter D.O.C), assist incarcerated individuals in attaining the documents necessary for employment and a positive life in society. If the incarcerated individual qualifies, this bill will require the D.O.C. to assist with the attainment photo identification from the Department of

Motor Vehicles, Food Supplement Programs, Medical Assistance, 90 days of public transportation passes, and a one-month supply of any essential medicine. All of this is aimed at removing the stumbling blocks that increase the likelihood of recidivism. Benjamin Franklin famously said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In this instance, I strongly support the concept of investing in people in the effort to give them the opportunity to move past their prior errors and assist them in becoming successful participating members of society. No prosecutor relishes the idea of having a “repeat customer” and if this bill will make that possibility less likely, then that is all the reason needed to support it.

For these reasons, **I respectfully request a favorable report for House Bill 0877.**