



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Judiciary Committee**

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

**House Bill 1022- Labor and Employment – Postconviction Work Readiness Program**

Good afternoon esteemed colleagues,

House Bill 1022 Labor and Employment – Postconviction Work Readiness Program recognizes the challenges that individuals with a felony criminal conviction face as they try to reintegrate back into society. Oftentimes, these individuals face significant barriers to securing gainful employment due to the stigma of their label, even though they have served their time and paid their debt to society. However, we cannot afford to turn a blind eye to this issue as we do not want these individuals to resort to illegal activities in order to provide for themselves and their families. House Bill 1022 seeks to establish a Post-Conviction Work Readiness Program to address this matter.

The Post-Conviction Work Readiness Program (House Bill 1022) proposes a crucial step towards empowering these individuals and providing them with the tools they need to succeed. Through job training, placement services, and support from participating employers, the program can help these individuals overcome the stigma and obstacles they face in securing and maintaining employment. I believe that this program is a critical step towards empowering individuals with a criminal conviction and promoting a more inclusive and equitable society. By investing in their future, we can reduce recidivism, promote public safety, and contribute to the economic growth and prosperity of our state. Investing in this program is not only the right thing to do, but it is also a smart public safety measure by combating poverty, crime, and recidivism.

We have heard many stories this session of folks re-entering society who struggle to provide for themselves and their family. We have to break the cycle of poverty and crime, and allow these individuals to contribute positively to society.

I strongly believe that this bill proposes an innovative and effective solution to the problem, which is why I'm here to express my support. Therefore, I urge you to take action now and show our unwavering commitment to a more inclusive and equitable society. Let us come together and make a real difference in the lives of our fellow citizens by supporting the Post-Conviction Work Readiness Program.

Friendly amendments have been submitted by some of the local employment development practitioners to allocate the funding directly to them to achieve this work. I am aligned with their intent and their expertise. There is no need to reinvent the wheel when there are good folks doing the work.

I respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on HB 1022 and the adoption of the friendly amendments.



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Here are 10 reasons how this bill could assist with public safety:

1. *Support reentry into society:* The program could provide essential resources and support to individuals with felony convictions to successfully reintegrate into society, promoting a safer and more productive community.
2. *Reduce recidivism rates:* By providing dedicated services to individuals with felony convictions to obtain and retain employment, the program could reduce recidivism rates and contribute to public safety.
3. *Improve employment prospects:* The program could improve the employment prospects of individuals with felony convictions, reducing their likelihood of engaging in criminal activity due to lack of economic opportunity.
4. *Reduce reliance on public assistance:* By helping individuals with felony convictions secure stable employment, the program could reduce their reliance on public assistance, resulting in cost savings for the state and increased economic stability for individuals.
5. *Address root causes of criminal activity:* The program could address the root causes of criminal activity, such as poverty and lack of economic opportunity, by providing individuals with the tools and resources to secure stable employment and contribute to their communities.
6. *Increase community engagement:* By supporting individuals with felony convictions to obtain and retain employment, the program could increase their engagement in their communities and promote positive social connections, reducing the likelihood of future criminal activity.
7. *Promote personal responsibility:* By providing individuals with the opportunity to gain employment and support themselves and their families, the program could promote personal responsibility and self-sufficiency, contributing to a safer and more resilient community.
8. *Reduce burden on the criminal justice system:* By reducing recidivism rates and promoting successful reentry into society, the program could reduce the burden on the criminal justice system and allow resources to be focused on addressing more serious crimes.
9. *Increase public safety:* By addressing the root causes of criminal activity and supporting individuals with felony convictions to obtain stable employment, the program could contribute to increased public safety and a more productive community.
10. *Provide essential data and evaluation:* The requirement for the Department to submit a report to the General Assembly that evaluates the Postconviction Work Readiness Program can provide essential data and information to improve the program and ensure its success in supporting individuals with felony convictions and contributing to public safety.