



House Bill 661

Workgroup to Study Reentry

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judiciary Committee

WITH AMENDMENTS

Date: February 23, 2023

From: Sarah Sample and Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 661 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would study the reentry process for individuals following a completed term of incarceration in either a state or local correctional facility. Counties commend the establishment of this workgroup but believe the recommendations and outcomes would benefit from the inclusion of local correctional representatives having a voice in the process.

Justice-involved individuals encounter a great number of challenges when they embark on the process of rebuilding their lives from whatever struggles led them to incarceration. Many county correctional facilities provide reentry plans to help set up these individuals for success, such as connecting them to community-based services, local health department programs, medical coverage, transportation, education, and more. These local officials have a great deal of insight to offer on how these programs work and could be improved.

True rehabilitation hinges on the ability to incorporate oneself back into society as a productive, law-abiding citizen. These individuals need to establish housing, employment, transportation, and more for themselves and potentially dependents. These priorities must also be managed in conjunction with reentry requirements like navigating medical treatments, accessing peer services, and keeping up with check-ins and parole protocols. Reentry services have the potential to influence how well an individual is prepared to navigate this process and help eliminate obstacles that might present a setback.

These teams in each jurisdiction face similar challenges as state programs but from a slightly different vantage point. Resources are often limited, and challenges abound, but they are steadfast in their resolve. Recommendations that are applicable to every stage of reentry will ensure that programs at both the state and county level can hedge success for as many individuals as possible.

For these reasons, MACo urges a report of **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** for HB 661, to include local correctional representatives in the workgroup.