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HB 877

March 7, 2023

TO: Members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 877 – Correctional Services - Incarcerated Individuals - Intake and Release (Reentry Success Act)

POSITION: Support

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 877.

HB 877 would require the Division of Corrections to provide screening for and access to services for people incarcerated in state correctional facilities, which would set them up for a successful reentry post-incarceration. Services would include mediation with a person selected by the incarcerated person (so long as that person was not a victim of a crime by the incarcerated person), a government photo ID card, food benefits if the individual qualifies, a one-month supply of any necessary medications, and 90-days' worth of public transportation passes. The Division will begin working with individuals six-months prior to their release in order to ensure all the aforementioned services are in place.

Maryland has 24 state prison facilities. As of 2020, there were 15,632 people incarcerated in Maryland prisons and jails, meaning that out of every 100,000 people in the state, 258 are incarcerated.¹ Some jurisdictions in Maryland are disproportionately impacted by incarceration, including the Eastern Shore and Hagerstown. However, no jurisdiction is as disproportionately affected as Baltimore City, where 1 in every 100 residents is incarcerated in state prison. While 9% of Marylanders live in Baltimore City, Baltimoreans represent 40% of the state's incarcerated population.²

¹ National Institute of Corrections. (n.d.). Maryland 2020. Retrieved from <https://nicic.gov/state-statistics/2020/maryland-2020#:~:text=The%20Prison%20System,private%20prisons%20or%20local%20jails.>

² Prison Policy Initiative and Justice Policy Institute. (2022). Where people in prison come from: The geography of mass incarceration in Maryland. Retrieved from <https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Where-People-in-Prison-Come-From.pdf>

Incarcerated people face significant barriers to reintegration. Among the most frequently self-identified needs are transportation, food, and social supports.³ Additionally, research shows that returning citizens' health affects their ability to have a successful transition to reentry, impacting their ability to work, maintain familial relationships, and, ultimately, whether they are likely to return to prison.⁴ A systematic review of reentry programs found that a program providing an assessment of individuals' needs and a two month "phasing in prerelease process" yielded good results and was cited by participants as reducing the stress associated with reentry.⁵ This bodes well for the bill's plan to work with individuals for six months prior to their release.

HB 877 would provide Maryland's returning citizens with the necessary supports for successful reentry. Leaving prison can a highly stressful time, presenting many social, financial, and health challenges for those reentering life outside of prison.⁶ Providing the social supports included in this bill could ease this transition and set our returning citizens up for success. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 877.

³ Morani, N., Wikoff, N. Linhorst, D., and Bratton, S. (2011). A Description of the Self-Identified Needs, Service Expenditures, and Social Outcomes of Participants of a Prisoner-Reentry Program. *The Prison Journal*, 91, 3. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885511409896>

⁴ Link, NW, Ward, JT, Stansfield, R. (2019). Consequences of mental and physical health for reentry and recidivism: Toward a health-based model of desistance. *Criminology*. 57: 544– 573. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12213>

⁵ Kendall, S., Redshaw, S., Ward, S. et al. (2018). Systematic review of qualitative evaluations of reentry programs addressing problematic drug use and mental health disorders amongst people transitioning from prison to communities. *Health Justice* 6, 4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40352-018-0063-8>

⁶ Western, B., Braga, A. A., Davis, J., & Sirois, C. (2015). Stress and Hardship after Prison. *AJS; American journal of sociology*, 120(5), 1512–1547. <https://doi.org/10.1086/681301>