

LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Unfavorable

House Bill 1163 – Human Relations - Protections Against Discrimination - Criminal Records

House Judiciary Committee

Thursday, March 9, 2023

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 6,400 members and federated partners working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic health and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

House Bill 1163 prohibits discrimination based on an individual's criminal record in areas including public accommodations, commercial leasing, housing, and employment.

This legislation would prohibit employers from utilizing important information that could affect hiring decisions and will leave employers liable for not doing due diligence in their research in the case of criminal or fraudulent acts committed by potential employees. While HB 1163 exempts certain individuals with a criminal record from these protections, the bill makes no exception for many crimes, including assault, theft, fraud, embezzlement, identity theft and breach of trust. It would prevent pharmacies from making a determination about distribution offenses, trucking companies from weighing concerns about past driving offenses, and businesses that collect money and/or have access to personal and confidential information belonging to customers from learning about theft offenses.

The Chamber has been supportive of thoughtful efforts by the Maryland General Assembly to enact second chance legislation that protects employers, employees, consumers and provides opportunities for the formerly incarcerated, but we believe that this legislation does not adequately allow for Maryland's employers to responsibly ensure the safety of their workforce and customers.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests an **Unfavorable Report** on **HB 1134**.