

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Maryland Legislator

My name is Alfie Powell. I am 56 years of age.

I am ONE of over 2 million working poor and low-income individuals in Maryland. I became a barber in 1996 until 2023, after my four strokes and heart transplant. Social Security with SSI program have been helping me for 28 years. Simultaneously, I stay in and out of school.

**1<sup>st</sup> request-** The **Income Threshold** for individuals receiving SSI and disability to be increased. The current threshold is 12,000 yearly totally inadequate. SSI's 12,000 and my 12,000 earned income together = 24,000. This is poverty. I needed Medicare, the best medical coverage in the country.

**While I healed form my surgery, I became comfortable, too comfortable**

**I followed the rules for 24 years, like a dog tied to a leash; unaware until 2020 that I needed:**

1. A case worker / Consoler
  2. 401k retirement plans
  3. Pension
  4. Life Insurance.
- 2012 the home buying program for Disable individuals was abolished.
  - We don't need you to take away Home buying programs, we need you to abolish POVERTY.
  - Is all of this poverty, design by Legislation?

**We need COMMON SENSE legislation and programs that WORK!!!**

**2<sup>nd</sup> request** - Develop program to help individuals to **build their income**

**Jobs that set us up for the future We need ...ABOVE POVERTY salary jobs.**

May 2023, Social Security let me go **because...**

- 2020 During Covid, they started Tracking my earnings I worked at
  1. Home Depot (2020)
  2. Live Casino (2021)
  3. Contract Job at National Institute of Health (2022) end of contract June 2023.
- **Ticket to Work program** told me I could make as much money as I wanted to. (SET UP to Fail)
- **WORK TRAIL PERIOD** had ended 2021. Social Security said they sent a letter indicating the end of my work trail Period. I do not remember any letter.
- **Social Security** kept paying me 1000. Monthly. I did not realize that my Work trail period had ended.
- 2022, my taxes reflected 31,000 earned income. 31 thousand dollars is STILL... poverty.

**2023 Governor Wes More .... Work Force Exchange**

I wrote a letter to Governor Wes More requesting Accounting Apprenticeship for individual in my age range. The only apprenticeships at that time were for Job Corp twenty-year-olds. I am too old for job corp.

I finished a fundamental of Payroll Certification class **SECOND TIME**

August 2021

February 2024 I was applying for jobs for 3 years but the school transcript was wrong. My school transcript read incomplete after I completed every assignment and finished the class.

Now, I am registered to take a **Human Resource Management Certification class** with Work Force Exchange, June 2024. After the class is complete, I would like to register for the Accounting Technician Apprenticeship. I was told by my work Force Exchange consoler, "No, I cannot take the Accounting Technician Apprenticeship. I must decide which one do I want to take the Accounting Technician Apprenticeship or the Human Resource Management Certification class.

The Accounting Technician Apprenticeship is like a eight hour job; 200 work days within a calendar year. Upon completion of the Accounting Technician Apprenticeship program, I would qualify to become an employee. **I don't want to just be an employee.** The Human Resource Management Certification class is a one day per week three-month class. Upon completion of the Human Resource Management Certification class, I will have management training.

Social Security told me that If I start working again try are going to **CUT ME OFF FOR GOOD.**

**We need job training** and programs developed to help individuals to **build their income**

**We need ABOVE POVERTY salary jobs. Jobs that set us up for the future.**

**24 thousand is POVERTY,... 31 thousand is POVERTY,... 39 Thousand is POVERTY**

**We need COMMON SENSE legislation and programs that WORK!!!**

**3<sup>rd</sup> request-** Stop punishing people who want to work.

I appreciate Social Security but, I CANNOT

work for 6 months or give them \$20,000. This six months of not working is burying me in dept.

- In 2023, General Electric 7 billion, paid absolutely No Taxes, but they received a 423 million dollar Tax Refund.
- I have been SET-UP only to be put down by....Social Security has put me on LOCK-DOWN.

-stay home for six months

- Pay them \$20,000. Dollars

- I am standing here because I am HOMELESS.

I cannot afford to WORK.

I cannot afford to Pay my Rent.

I cannot afford to go on VACATION.

I cannot afford to BURY MYSELF.

**We need COMMON SENSE legislation and programs that lift people out of poverty and intentions to abolish poverty Now!**

