



**MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE**

**March 07, 2024**

**HB 1037**

**Task Force on the Creation of a Division of Returning Citizens and Expanded Reentry Services -  
Establishment**

**House Judiciary Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of House Bill 1037. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 1037 would establish the Task Force on the Creation of a Division of Returning Citizens and Expanded Reentry Services. This legislation will help make important strides towards promoting the successful reintegration of individuals returning from incarceration into our communities.

We are called to recognize the inherent dignity of every human person and to seek the rehabilitation and redemption of those who have been involved in the criminal justice system. Returning citizens face numerous challenges as they transition back into society, including barriers to employment, housing, education, and healthcare. By establishing a Task Force dedicated to exploring the creation of a Division of Returning Citizens and Expanded Reentry Services, we demonstrate our commitment to supporting individuals in their journey toward healing, restoration, and full participation in community life.

Our Catholic faith emphasizes the importance of solidarity and the common good, urging us to work together to build a society that upholds the dignity and rights of all its members. Investing in reentry services and supports not only benefits returning citizens but also strengthens families, communities, and society as a whole. By providing returning citizens with the resources, support, and opportunities they need to rebuild their lives, we contribute to safer, healthier, and more prosperous communities for everyone. The provision in the legislation that requires the Task Force to submit a report to the General Assembly is very helpful as it underscores the importance of transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making in this critical area. This report will provide valuable insights and recommendations for policymakers to consider as they work to develop and implement effective reentry services and supports.

The MCC appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 1037.

