



Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

Testimony for Senate Bill 815

Occupational Licensing and Certification - Criminal History - Prohibited Disclosures

TO: Hon. C. T. Wilson, Chair, and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: March 26, 2024

POSITION: Support

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF supports Senate Bill 815.**

The purpose of SB 815 is to provide a pathway for those who have an arrest or minor non-violent misdemeanor criminal background to become licensed for occupations under the Department of Labor.

In addition we supported in the Senate a sponsor amendment to further limit this bill to only six occupations under the Department of Labor: barbers, cosmetologists, electricians, plumbers, home improvement and heating, and air-conditioning. The Senate Finance Committee amended it to include only barbers and cosmetologists.

Under the bill, the licensing board would be prohibited from asking about a person's prior arrest or minor non violent criminal background in the application process for those two aforementioned occupations.

JOTF eliminated several other state agencies that were in SB 54 from last year. This was done after reviewing the opposition to that bill from last year and narrowing its scope and its remedy.

As a consequence we think SB 815 addresses the concerns of the opposition from last year and remains a step forward for those seeking the opportunity to move forward in these occupations.

There are tens of thousands, up to close to a million state residents who have some type of criminal history, many for arrests or minor offenses. This bill not only helps affected persons by helping them enter into occupations and becoming gainfully employed, but also helps the state by them joining the workforce and becoming part of the tax base.

For these reasons, JOTF supports Senate Bill 815 and urges a favorable report.

For more information, contact:

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