

Chair Senator Pamela Beidle, Vice Chair Senator Antonio Hayes and Members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in favorable support with amendments to Senator Bill 815. Also, thank you Senator Watson for sponsoring this bill - and your support of improvements to the occupational licensing and certification – criminal history – prohibited disclosures processes materialized in this senator bill.

As a former returning citizen. I am presently enrolled as an Advanced Standing Master of Social Work student at the University of Baltimore School of Social Work. I have experienced firsthand the challenges of navigating the occupational licensing processes with a non-violent criminal history. My personal journey has shown me the importance of providing individuals with a non-violent criminal history, a fair chance to obtain occupational licenses and certifications.

The current language of SB815 is a step in the right direction, but I urge the committee to consider amendments that would provide individuals with criminal histories greater opportunities for success. Specifically, I propose expanding the provisions that prohibit departments from denying occupational licenses or certifications solely based on an individual's non-violent criminal history.

I also recommend enhancing the predetermination review processes to provide individuals with clear guidance on the licensing requirements and potential barriers. This would help individuals navigate the licensing process more effectively and avoid unnecessary delays.

Furthermore, I propose amending the review process to consider the individual's entire life history, including education, employment, and community involvement, rather than solely focusing on their non-violent criminal history. This integrated approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of an individual's qualifications and potential for success.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to pass SB815 with the proposed amendments. By providing individuals with non-violent criminal histories a fair chance to obtain occupational licenses and certifications, we can create a more inclusive and supportive licensing process that recognizes the unique strengths and challenges of individuals with non-violent criminal histories. I respectfully request the Finance Committee to support a favorable report with the amendments that I communicated, here in my peer-lived experience written testimony on Senator Bill 815.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to share my experiences, strengths, and hopes.

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[My Single-Story ' Life in Long-term Recovery](#)  
[My Recovery Book "Can I Do This"](#)

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