

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

Testimony for Senate Bill 815

Occupational Licensing and Certification - Criminal History - Prohibited Disclosures

TO: Hon. Brian J. Feldman, Chair, and Hon. Pamela Beidle, Chair, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment and Finance Committees

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: March 6, 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 support 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.

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.

JOTF eliminated several other state departments in SB 815 that were in SB 54 from last year and also eliminated the predetermination process as well that generated significant opposition. This was done after reviewing the opposition to SB 54 from last year and narrowing its scope and its remedy, based on its failure last year in this committee.

As a consequence we think SB 815 addresses the concerns of the opposition from last year.

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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