



February 3, 2025

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

As the President and CEO of the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce, I write to you in support of SB.398 and HB.545, known as Clean Slate Maryland. These commonsense bills would provide much-needed relief not only to our fellow Marylanders with eligible criminal records, but also to our employers, workforce, and economy.

The Salisbury Area Chamber represents over 700 businesses and organizations throughout the Eastern Shore, including those in agriculture, finance, healthcare, education, hospitality, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and more. Our membership is made up of 80% small businesses, the backbone of our state's economy. Our mission is to serve our members' interests through business advocacy, connections, education, and promoting economic development for the whole region. For that reason, the Salisbury Area Chamber strongly supports the passage of Clean Slate in Maryland.

There are approximately one million adults in Maryland with some form of a criminal record, and many of whom face significant barriers to employment. Meanwhile, employers across the state continue struggling to fill open positions. Classified by the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) as having one of the most severe labor shortages in the country, it's imperative that we start taking steps to help rebuild our workforce. By automating the record clearing process for certain misdemeanors, Clean Slate is able to do just that. An estimated 400,000 Marylanders are already eligible to have their records cleared and will be able to reenter the workforce, allowing our local businesses to tap into an expansive and diverse talent pool.

Providing a clean slate will not only benefit the workforce, but also our overall state economy. Recent studies indicate that underemployment related to imprisonment or conviction reduces people's wages nationwide by [as much as \\$372.3 billion annually](#). Similarly, it's been estimated that the U.S. loses roughly [\\$87 billion a year](#) due to the underemployment of formerly incarcerated individuals. As we continue to work towards a more prosperous Maryland, it's critical that we help our citizens prosper first. It's time to get our hard-working Marylanders back to work and allow them to contribute their money back into our local businesses and economies.

The Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce is proud to represent the interests of hundreds of businesses across Maryland, and we believe that Clean Slate is an innovative solution to the needs of our business community and beyond. Our fellow Marylanders are in need of stable, sustainable employment and our local businesses are in need of qualified employees. SB.398 and HB.545 present a unique opportunity for the legislature to clear a path towards a more equitable and prosperous Maryland for all its residents and local businesses.

Sincerely,

William R. Chambers  
President/CEO  
Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce

**SALISBURY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
*The Voice for Business on Delmarva*