



Testimony for the House of Delegates Ways and Means Committee
February 6, 2025, at 1:00 PM

Re: Support for HB 634 and SB 295 – "Maryland Fair Taxation for Justice-Involved Individuals Act"

February 4, 2025

Dear Delegate Wims, Delegate North, and Senator McCray,

The Morgan State University's Entrepreneurial Development & Assistance Center (EDAC) is proud to support initiatives that advance equity and economic opportunity for all Marylanders. We write to express our strong support for HB 634 and SB 295, the "Maryland Fair Taxation for Justice-Involved Individuals Act," which provides vital financial relief for individuals reentering society after incarceration.

HB 634 and SB 295 establish the Income Tax Reconciliation Program, which allows justice-involved individuals to set up installment payment plans for unpaid state income taxes accrued during incarceration. By waiving penalties and interest and offering payment terms of up to ten years, this program provides a fair and practical way for individuals to resolve their financial obligations and rebuild their economic stability.

Reentering society after incarceration comes with significant challenges, including financial hardships that can limit opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, and housing. This legislation addresses one of these barriers by providing a structured and supportive mechanism to help justice-involved individuals meet their tax obligations. The inclusion of public awareness efforts and annual reporting by the Comptroller further ensures that the program is accessible and impactful.

At EDAC, we understand the importance of providing justice-involved individuals with the tools and resources they need to succeed. When we remove financial and systemic barriers, we create opportunities for these individuals to reintegrate fully into our communities, contribute to our economy, and build stable, productive lives.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 634 and SB 295. This legislation reflects Maryland's commitment to justice, equity, and economic opportunity.

Thank you for your leadership and thoughtful consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Omar S Muhammad

Omar Muhammad

Director

Morgan State University

Entrepreneurial Development & Assistance Center (EDAC)