



Senate Bill 0305
Qualifying Nonprofit Organizations-Incarcerated Individual Training and Reentry Grant
Fund-Extension
In the Budget and Taxation Committee
Hearing on February 3, 2026
Position: FAVORABLE

Maryland Legal Aid submits its written testimony on **SB0305** at the request of Senator Shelly Hettleman.

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) is the state’s largest provider of free civil legal services for low-income Marylanders. We regularly assist individuals transitioning from incarceration who face overwhelming barriers to employment, housing, and economic security. **SB 0305 directly addresses these barriers by funding nonprofit organizations to deliver job training, workforce readiness, and supportive reentry services.**

MLA supported Vehicles for Change (VFC) for many years through our workforce legal services program. VFC’s automotive mechanic programming trains pre-release and recently incarcerated individuals, equipping them with critical job skills. VFC integrated legal services into its program to offer holistic support for its trainees. MLA provided advice and representation on expungement, housing, custody, and child support.

SB0305 supports justice-involved individuals by providing critical funding for workforce programs that benefit Maryland’s economy.

MLA represents previously incarcerated individuals through our expungement practice. In our experience, stable employment is one of the strongest predictors of successful reentry and reduced recidivism. Returning citizens routinely encounter systemic barriers, including limited access to training, employer bias, credentialing restrictions, and insufficient transitional support. The Incarcerated Individual Training and Reentry Grant Fund helps close these gaps by enabling trusted community-based organizations to deliver targeted, skills-based programming that prepares individuals for sustainable employment. By extending this fund, SB0305 strengthens Maryland’s workforce pipeline, benefiting not only returning citizens but also Maryland businesses and local economies.

SB0305 promotes community reintegration.

Continuing this grant fund ensures that formerly incarcerated individuals receive meaningful opportunities to rebuild their lives, support their families, and become

contributing members of their communities. Nonprofit service providers supported through this fund, like VFC, are uniquely positioned to offer culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and community-centered programming.

MLA urges the passage of SB0305 to affirm Maryland's commitment to an effective reentry program.

Granting an extension under SB0305 is sensible because it strengthens communities, promotes workforce development, and supports successful reintegration. **SB 0305 reaffirms Maryland's commitment to a smart, humane, and effective reentry policy.**

For these reasons, Maryland Legal Aid respectfully requests a **favorable report** on Senate Bill 305.

If you would like additional information on this bill or the underlying issues it addresses, please contact Meaghan McDermott, Advocacy Director for Community Lawyering and Development at mmcdermott@mdlaborg or N. Renae Davis, Chief Attorney for Workers' Rights at ndavis@mdlaborg.