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**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TESTIMONY ON HB557**

TO: Chair Valderrama, Economic Matters Committee  
FROM: John Dove, Commissioner  
DATE: February 16, 2026  
BILL: HB557 Licensing Predetermination Review Process

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**MDL POSITION: SUPPORT**

House Bill 557 aims to reduce unnecessary barriers to occupational and professional licensure for individuals with prior involvement in the justice system. It seeks to establish a fair, transparent, and consistent process by clearly defining eligibility requirements and outlining any exclusionary factors. Through this framework, the bill would promote equitable access to professional opportunities while maintaining the standards necessary for public protection.

Many Marylanders with a criminal history often assume they are automatically disqualified from obtaining a license. Implementing a predetermination process would help dispel this misconception by providing clarity and transparency regarding their eligibility. This would encourage more qualified candidates to pursue training and employment in licensed occupations who might have otherwise excluded themselves. Further, the predetermination process saves prospective licensees time and money by ensuring that they will not go through the process of completing training, classes, and other licensure requirements just to be denied at the end of the process because of their criminal record.

By enacting this legislation, Maryland would expand its pool of skilled professionals, strengthen its workforce, and create new pathways for economic mobility, all while upholding the public's trust and safety.

The Department respectfully requests a favorable report on HB557.

For questions, please contact Andrew Fulginiti at **[Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov](mailto:Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov)**.