



Board of Nursing

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

March 25, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: HB 557 – Occupational Licensing and Certification - Criminal History -
Predetermination Review Process – Support with Amendments**

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Boards of Nursing, Acupuncture, Dental, Morticians and Funeral Directors, Physical Therapy, Podiatry, Professional Counselors and Therapists, Psychology, and Social Work (the “Boards”) respectfully submit this letter of support with amendments for HB 557 – Occupational Licensing and Certification - Criminal History - Predetermination Review Process.

This bill establishes a predetermination review process for occupational licenses and certificates in certain departments of State government and authorizes a department to charge a criminal history review fee of not more than \$100 or to waive the fee under certain circumstances.

While the intent of HB 557 to increase transparency and reduce barriers to licensure is commendable, the Boards are concerned that, as drafted, the bill may unintentionally limit its ability to fully evaluate applicants and could create additional barriers for individuals with criminal history seeking licensure.

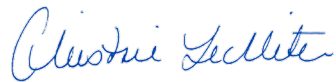
Under current law, applicants seeking licensure or certification from the Boards must complete a criminal history records check (CHRC) and disclose prior criminal history. The Boards conduct a comprehensive, individualized review of each case, applying the factors outlined in §1-209 of the Criminal Procedure Article. Importantly, denial of licensure based solely on criminal history is rare. The Boards’ current processes are designed to ensure that prior criminal history does not automatically disqualify an applicant, while still upholding its mandate to protect public health and safety.

The Boards’ ability to conduct a holistic review of each applicant remains essential. The proposed predetermination process, while well-intentioned, may lead to unintended consequences. Without access to a full application and complete context—including education, work history, rehabilitation efforts, and mitigating factors—the Boards may be compelled, out of caution, to issue preliminary denials in cases that might otherwise result in approval following a full review. This could necessitate additional reconsideration or appeal processes, increasing administrative burdens on both the Boards and applicants, and potentially discouraging individuals from pursuing licensure.

The Boards, in collaboration with other Health Occupations Boards, have worked with the bill sponsor to develop amendment language to **exclude Health Occupations boards** from the predetermination requirements. Accordingly, the Boards respectfully request a favorable report with amendments on HB 557.

Thank you again for your time. For more information, please contact Ms. Mitzi Fishman, Director of Legislative Affairs, at 410-585-2049 or mitzi.fishman@maryland.gov, or Ms. Rhonda Scott, Executive Director, at 410-585-1953 or rhonda.scott2@maryland.gov; or the Legislative Liaison for the Boards, Lillian Reese at 410-794-4757 or lillian.reese@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine Lechliter". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Christine Lechliter
Board President

The opinion of the Boards expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.



HB0557/953324/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

17 FEB 26
16:24:40

BY: Delegate Harrison
(To be offered in the Economic Matters Committee)

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 557
(First Reading File Bill)

On page 3, in line 14, after “**(1)**” insert “**THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO AN INDIVIDUAL APPLYING FOR A LICENSE OR THE RENEWAL OF A LICENSE UNDER THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE.**”

(2)”;

in lines 27 and 32, strike “**(2)**” and “**(3)**”, respectively, and substitute “**(3)**” and “**(4)**”, respectively; and in lines 29 and 34, in each instance, strike “**(1)**” and substitute “**(2)**”.

On page 4, in line 2, strike “**(1)**” and substitute “**(2)**”; and in line 5, strike “**(4)**” and substitute “**(5)**”.