



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 944**

**Correctional Services - Reentry Readiness Program**

TO: Hon. William Smith, Chair, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Zachary Alberts, Director of Advocacy and Strategic Initiatives at the Center for Urban Families

DATE: February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026

Good afternoon, my name is Zachary Alberts. I am the Director of Advocacy and Strategic Initiatives at the Center for Urban Families, a workforce and family strengthening program in Baltimore City. The Center for Urban Families requests a favorable report on SB 944, which would assist individuals returning from incarceration (“returning citizens”) with obtaining necessary I9 documents, as well as enrollment in a workforce employment program if they so desire.

As a workforce development organization who serves more than 1000 individuals a year, almost half of whom are justice impacted, we see every single day what a challenge it is for returning citizens to navigate re-entry without proper documentation. Because a birth certificate and driver’s license or photo id are required to access housing, get employment, access benefits, etc. individuals who come home from incarceration without them face an even tougher, more bureaucratic path to a post-incarceration life.

Not only is scheduling the actual appointments challenging for individuals who may not be comfortable or familiar with modern technology and modern processes, but they often cost money to obtain. We have even seen these types of processes feeling so insurmountable, that individuals return to the underground culture and economies they are comfortable navigating.

This legislation will provide individuals a strong foundation from which to build the rest of their life.

We urge a favorable report.