



**SB 61 - Division of Correction - Release Preparation Program**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**January 28, 2026**  
**SUPPORT**

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 61. This bill will create a peer-led reentry support program and recognize that people who have lived experience with incarceration can be impactful in preparing others for successful release.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

SB 61 establishes a Release Preparation Program within Maryland's Division of Correction that allows formerly incarcerated individuals to return to correctional facilities to support people preparing for release. This bill creates a structured and accountable way to incorporate lived experience into reentry preparation.

Peer-led reentry support strengthens release planning, reduces barriers to reintegration, and promotes safer, more stable outcomes for returning citizens. Individuals leaving incarceration often face immediate challenges, including limited employment opportunities, difficulty enrolling in public benefits, housing instability, and the emotional strain of readjusting to life outside. Support from people who have navigated these same challenges can help individuals better understand what to expect, avoid common mistakes, and connect to resources more effectively.

CASH has seen the power of peer support and community-centered approaches firsthand. As the nonprofit administrator of Baltimore City's Guaranteed Income program, which served 200 young parents ages 18 to 24, participants consistently shared that building community and learning from others with shared experiences was critical to their mental health, stability, and ability to plan for their futures. These lessons apply directly to reentry. People thrive when they have connection, trust, and credible guidance.

This bill represents a practical, evidence-informed step toward improving reentry outcomes, reducing recidivism, and supporting safer communities across Maryland.

***We encourage you to return a favorable report for SB 61.***

*Creating Assets, Savings and Hope*