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SB 0944

February 25, 2026

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director, Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: Senate Bill 944: Correctional Services – Reentry Readiness Program

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 944. This bill would require the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to establish a Reentry Readiness Program to support Marylanders preparing to return home from incarceration with assistance accessing vital records and employment development programs.

Approximately 2,000 Baltimoreans return from prison each year. According to the Justice Policy Institute, Baltimoreans are disproportionately impacted by mass incarceration — representing 40% of the state's prison population despite being home to just 9% of Maryland's overall population.¹ Often, these residents return home with significant barriers to meaningful employment and successful reentry. They frequently lack current driver's licenses, birth certificates, and skills needed to fully reintegrate into society.

People should not return home from incarceration to the exact same circumstances that they faced when they were arrested. By offering support ahead of release, we can help ensure formerly incarcerated Marylanders have the resources and opportunities necessary to rebuild their lives on the outside. This very approach is expressly outlined in Baltimore's Comprehensive Violence Prevention Plan. We are committed to continuing to work with DPSCS and other re-entry partners to strengthen reentry efforts here in Baltimore.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 944.

¹ "Baltimore City, and Other Black Communities in Maryland, Disproportionately Harmed by Alarming Rates of Incarceration - Justice Policy Institute." Justice Policy Institute, June 27, 2022.
<https://justicepolicy.org/press/baltimore-city-black-communities-in-maryland-disproportionately-harmed-by-alarming-rates-of-incarceration/>.