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MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



TO: Chair Edward Kasemeyer and Budget & Taxation Committee

FROM: Phil Caroom, MAJR Executive Committee

DATE: March 27, 2018

HB 476 offers a proven plan to improve the ex-offenders' employment prospects.

Both [federal](#) and state studies clearly show that ex-offenders who are employed are much less likely to commit new offenses than those who are unemployed. A 2017 Greater Baltimore Committee report summarizes this research, stating:

the single largest determinant of re-arrest and re-conviction is whether or not a person is able to find a job upon release from prison. The probability of re-conviction for someone who is employed within two months of release and earning \$10 or more per hour is only 8 percent, one-third of the probability of an unemployed ex-offender.

While there are minor tax revenue losses and administrative costs to reinstating this program, legislators should put this in the larger contexts. Without employment, the ex-offender is approximately twice as likely to return to prison, costing taxpayers \$38,000 per year on average—much more than HB 476's costs.

In addition to this cost of incarceration, Maryland should consider the impact on possible victims and on children and communities of the ex-offenders. According to a 2015 Huffington Post report, studies indicate that

Children of felons are seven times more likely to be incarcerated themselves. They are more likely (23 percent vs. 4 percent) to be expelled or suspended from school than other children.

For all these reasons, employer incentives to hire ex-offenders should be understood as important measures to support reduce taxpayer costs, as well as to promote family stability, public safety and crime-prevention.

Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) strongly supports HB 476 and urges the committee to give it a favorable report.

NOTICE: Consistent with Maryland Rule 16-813 - CJCR 3.2 and 3.7, Phil Caroom sends this communication at the request of the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) Executive Committee, not on behalf of the Maryland Judiciary.