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CR-49-2019 REENTRY ADVISORY BOARD

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Good afternoon Chairman Hawkins and Honorable Members of the Health, Human Services and Public Safety Committee (HHPS). For the record, I am Aisha Braveboy, State's Attorney for Prince George's County. This letter is submitted in support of CR-49-2019. This legislation is vitally important and is an important step in addressing the need for comprehensive reentry services. Reentry programs are designed to assist returning citizens with a successful transition to their community after they are released. An important focus of reentry efforts is to remove or reduce barriers to successful reentry, so that returning citizens - who have served their time and paid their debt to society - are able to compete for a job, attain stable housing, support their children and their families, and contribute to their communities.

Each year, more than 700,000 people are released from state and Federal prison, while an additional 9 million cycle through local jails. Statistics indicate that more than two-thirds of individuals incarcerated in state prisons are

rearrested within three years of their release and half are re-incarcerated. High rates of recidivism lead to more crime, more victims, and more pressure on an already overburdened criminal justice system. That why reentry services are vitally important. We must address the integration of our returning citizens directly. Therefore, I whole heartedly support a comprehensive change within the criminal justice system, promoting a combined public health and public safety approach to stop the cycle of arrest, incarceration, release, and re-arrest.

A comprehensive reentry strategy will assist with job placement, facilitating access to drug-free housing, and providing other supportive services for returning citizens. Reentry strategies and services make communities safer, assist returning citizens in becoming productive, tax-paying residents while saving taxpayer dollars by lowering the direct and collateral costs of incarceration. I recognize the importance of reentry services as a critical tool in breaking the cycle of drug use and crime and improving the public health and public safety of our communities. These ongoing efforts are necessary at all levels of government and I applaud the County Council's efforts. Supporting reentry programs, which assist returning citizens with a successful transition to their community after they are released, is key to reforming the criminal justice system. I urge your favorable vote on CR-49-2019.