

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2021 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CB-019-2021

Draft No.: 1

Committee: Committee of the Whole

Date: 4/01/2021

Action: HELD

REPORT: Held in Committee 11-0: Council Members Hawkins, Anderson-Walker, Davis, Dernoga, Franklin, Glaros, Harrison, Ivey, Streeter, Taveras and Turner.

The Prince George's County Council met on March 9, 2021 and was presented with CB-019-2021 which was referred to the Committee of the Whole on April 1, 2021. CB-019-2021, an act concerning the Prince George's County Re-entry Employment Incentive Program, establishes an incentive to encourage Prince George's County employers to hire County residents returning from incarceration. If approved the bill would create a new program in Division 27, Under Section 10-334 of the County Code, which identifies the establishment of terms including Qualifying Employee, Qualifying Employer, Qualifying Position and Incarcerated and determines program eligibility.

Although the number of Qualifying Employers has not been determined, as written, reimbursement to each Qualifying Employer, per Qualified Position, could be five dollars (\$5) per hour with a maximum of up to 1,000 hours or \$5,000 over a twelve (12) month period.

Similar legislation, CB-028-2020 was presented, discussed and held in Committee on September 29, 2020. During the presentation the Office of Finance suggested the responsibility of administering the program should be that of another agency. CB-019-2021 addresses the suggestion and it was determined that Employ Prince George's would serve as that agency, however, discretion is ultimately left to the County Executive. Disbursement of funds would be monitored in conjunction with Employ Prince George's and issued through the Director of Finance.

The Office of the County Executive also expressed concern about the fiscal impact of CB-028-2020 during the meeting on September 29, 2020. Therefore, CB-019-2021 addresses this by adding language that states if sufficient funds are not available, the Director of Finance shall not approve the Re-entry Employment Reimbursement Program Agreement for the employee.

During the discussion, the bill sponsor, Council Member Franklin detailed extensive work with stakeholders to refine the legislation during the last two legislative years. He stated that this is the time to ensure that returning citizens have a path back into society. The Prince George's County Re-entry Employment Incentives program is patterned after a successful program in Philadelphia and it is essentially in the same form.

Council Members deliberated over the legislation and as a result, Council Member Turner inquired about the possibility that the fiscal impact could be mitigated with the successful pursuit of Federal and or State funds and the Member's agreed that is a viable financial possibility; Council Member Franklin moved to hold the legislation to allow additional time to review the most recent draft (Draft 2), and Council Member Hawkins thanked the administration for working closely.

The Office of Law finds CB-019-2021 to be in proper legislative form and noted that Council Legislative staff provided language improvements by consolidating and clarifying the responsibilities of Employ Prince George's.

The Policy Analysis and Fiscal Note states that the enactment of CB-019-2021 could have a potentially positive indirect fiscal impact in the form of cost savings related to services typically provided to unemployed individuals seeking gainful employment.

After discussion, the Prince George's County Council, sitting as the Committee of the Whole, voted to hold CB-019-2021, 11-0.