



**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
COMMITTEE**

**Mission Statement**

*On behalf of the Citizens of Baltimore City, the Public Safety and Government Operations Committee will be responsible for matters concerning public safety, including, but not limited to; emergency preparedness, police services, fire/EMS, and the executive, administrative, and operational functions of the city government and libraries.*

**The Honorable Mark Conway  
Chair**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
1:02 PM  
CLARENCE "DU" BURNS COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

***Ordinance 23-0416***

***Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens***

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Robert Stokes  
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*Staff: Marguerite Currin (443-984-3485)*



**SYNOPSIS**

**Committee: Public Safety and Government Operations**

**Bill: 23-0416**

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**Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens**

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**Sponsor:** Council Member Torrence

**Introduced:** June 6, 2023

**Purpose:**

FOR the purpose of establishing a Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens; defining certain terms; providing for the appointment of the Director of the Office; establishing the duties of the Office; providing for the staff and budget of the Office; establishing the Re-Entry Action Council to advise and collaborate with the Office; providing for the appointment, structure, and governance of the Council; requiring the Director, Council members, and staff of the Office to file financial disclosures under the Ethics Code; and requiring that the Office submit an annual report to the Mayor and City Council.

**Effective:** n/a

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**AGENCY REPORTS**

City Solicitor	Approved for form and legal sufficiency
Department of Finance	No Opposition
Office of Equity and Civil Rights	Supports

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**ANALYSIS**

**Bill Summary**

This bill if enacted would create a new city office. The Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens would fulfill several duties including:

1. Advocating for returning citizens.
2. Coordinate and monitor service delivery to returning citizens.

3. Promote the general welfare, employment, and reintegration of returning citizens in the areas of:
  - a. Employment and career development.
  - b. Health care.
  - c. Education.
  - d. Housing.
  - e. Social services.
4. Review, comment, and make recommendations on proposed legislation and regulations, policies, and programs that will affect returning citizens.

Within the office would also be the Baltimore City Re-Entry Action Council. This council would 1. Advise the Office, Mayor, and City council on issues relating to returning citizens, and 2. Collaborate with the Office on matters regarding its (the office's) duties.

The council will have 14-25 members appointed by the Mayor with:

- 2 members nominated by the City Council President.
- 2 members nominated by the Comptroller.

Council members serve 4-year terms and elect a chair, vice chair, and secretary to 1-year terms for which they can be reelected. The Council must have at least one meeting a month.

The office will also make an annual report to the Mayor and City Council. This report will include details about:

1. The Office and the Council
2. Specific policy and legislative proposals to promote the general welfare, empowerment, and reintegration of returning citizens.

### **Background**

According to a report from the Justice Policy Institute and the Prison Policy Initiative Baltimore City - representing approximately 9% of the State's population - sends a disproportionate amount of residents into the prison system compared to other municipalities. 40% of Maryland residents in state prison are from the city. In fact, nearly a third of the State's prison population is from one of 10 Baltimore City neighborhoods . According to the report these communities include:

1. Midway/Coldstream
2. Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park
3. Madison/East End
4. Southwest Baltimore
5. Greenmount East

6. Greater Rosemount
7. Clifton-Berea
8. Upton/Druid Heights
9. Oldtown/Middle East
10. Southern Park Heights

High incarceration rates are linked to numerous adverse effects in a population. These can include health disparities such as higher morbidity and mortality rates and high rates of depressive and anxiety disorders. Reports cite studies that communities with high rates of incarceration even have reduced life expectancies compared to communities with lower rates.

Communities with high rates of incarceration tend to have residents who are underemployed or unemployed, long commute times to work, low household incomes, and fewer residents with a GED or high school level of education.

### ***Amendments***

The Law Department is offering a technical amendment to fix the numbering of the subtitle which will create the Office of Returning Citizens.

### Agency Reports

The Department of Finance estimates that it will take nearly 160,000 dollars to implement this office. But has concerns about the cost of an office with a robust responsibilities and programing which they estimate would need a budget of nearly 5 million dollars.

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## ***ADDITIONAL INFORMATION***

### **Fiscal Note: 159,704 to implement**

#### **Information Source(s):**

- 23-0416 1<sup>st</sup> reader and agency reports
- [Census Data reveals the burden of incarceration on Baltimore \(WYPR\)](#)
- [Where People in Prison Come From](#)

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Analysis by: Anthony Leva  
Analysis Date: July 24, 2022

Direct Inquiries to: 410-396-1091

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 23-0416  
(First Reader)**

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Introduced by: Councilmember Torrence

Introduced and read first time: August 21, 2023

Assigned to: Public Safety and Government Operations Committee

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Referred to the following agencies: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Office of Equity and Civil Rights

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens; defining certain  
4 terms; providing for the appointment of the Director of the Office; establishing the duties of  
5 the Office; providing for the staff and budget of the Office; establishing the Re-Entry Action  
6 Council to advise and collaborate with the Office; providing for the appointment, structure,  
7 and governance of the Council; requiring the Director, Council members, and staff of the  
8 Office to file financial disclosures under the Ethics Code; and requiring that the Office  
9 submit an annual report to the Mayor and City Council.

10 BY adding

11 Article 1 - Mayor, City Council, and Municipal Agencies  
12 Sections 59-1 through 59-10, to be under the new subtitle,  
13 "Subtitle 59. Office of Returning Citizens"  
14 Baltimore City Code  
15 (Edition 2000)

16 BY repealing and reordaining, with amendments

17 Article 8 - Ethics  
18 Section 7-8(38a)  
19 Baltimore City Code  
20 (Edition 2000)

21 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
22 Laws of Baltimore City read as follows:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.  
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

**Council Bill 23-0416**

**Baltimore City Code**

**Article 1. Mayor, City Council, and Municipal Agencies**

**Subtitle 58. OFFICE OF RETURNING CITIZENS**

**§ 59-1. DEFINITIONS.**

(A) *IN GENERAL.*

IN THIS SUBTITLE, THE FOLLOWING TERMS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) *COUNCIL.*

“COUNCIL” MEANS THE BALTIMORE CITY RE-ENTRY ACTION COUNCIL.

(C) *DIRECTOR.*

“DIRECTOR” MEANS THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF RETURNING CITIZENS.

(D) *OFFICE.*

“OFFICE” MEANS THE BALTIMORE CITY OFFICE OF RETURNING CITIZENS.

(E) *RETURNING CITIZEN.*

AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS A RESIDENT OF BALTIMORE CITY AND WHO:

(1) WAS FORMALLY CHARGED WITH A CRIME;

(2) WAS CONVICTED OF A CRIME; OR

(3) PARTICIPATED IN A DIVERSION PROGRAM WHERE THE INDIVIDUAL RECEIVED REHABILITATIVE INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORT IN LIEU OF A CRIMINAL CONVICTION.

**§ 59-2. RESERVED.**

**§ 59-3. OFFICE ESTABLISHED.**

THERE IS A BALTIMORE CITY OFFICE OF RETURNING CITIZENS.

**§ 59-4. DIRECTOR.**

(A) *IN GENERAL.*

THE DIRECTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND OVERSIGHT OF THE OFFICE.

**Council Bill 23-0416**

1 (B) *APPOINTMENT.*

2 THE DIRECTOR IS APPOINTED BY THE MAYOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE IV, § 6  
3 {"APPOINTMENTS OF MUNICIPAL OFFICERS"} OF THE CITY CHARTER.

4 **§59-5. Reserved.**

5 **§ 59-6. RE-ENTRY ACTION COUNCIL.**

6 (A) *ESTABLISHED.*

7 THERE IS A BALTIMORE CITY RE-ENTRY ACTION COUNCIL WITHIN THE OFFICE.

8 (B) *DUTIES OF COUNCIL.*

9 THE COUNCIL MUST:

10 (1) ADVISE THE OFFICE AND THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL ON ISSUES RELATING TO  
11 RETURNING CITIZENS; AND

12 (2) COLLABORATE AND CONSULT WITH THE OFFICE ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE  
13 DISCHARGE OF THE OFFICE'S DUTIES.

14 (C) *COMPOSITION.*

15 (1) *IN GENERAL.*

16 THE COUNCIL COMPRISES AT LEAST 14 MEMBERS BUT NO MORE THAN 25  
17 MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE MAYOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE IV, § 6  
18 {"APPOINTMENTS OF MUNICIPAL OFFICERS"} OF THE CITY CHARTER WITH:

19 (I) 2 MEMBERS NOMINATED BY THE CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT; AND

20 (II) 2 MEMBERS NOMINATED BY THE COMPTROLLER.

21 (2) *DIVERSITY.*

22 (I) TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE MAYOR MUST APPOINT COUNCIL MEMBERS  
23 THAT ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY, WITH  
24 REGARD TO SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER  
25 IDENTIFICATION, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AND AGE.

26 (II) AT LEAST 1 OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL MUST BE A MEMBER OF A  
27 GROUP, ORGANIZATION, OR SERVICE PROVIDER THAT FOCUSES ON THE NEEDS  
28 OF FEMALE RETURNING CITIZENS.



**Council Bill 23-0416**

1 (D) *TERMS.*

- 2 (1) COUNCIL MEMBERS SERVE A TERM OF 4 YEARS, CONCURRENT WITH THE TERMS OF THE  
3 MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL.
- 4 (2) AT THE END OF A TERM, A MEMBER CONTINUES TO SERVE UNTIL A SUCCESSOR IS  
5 APPOINTED AND QUALIFIES.
- 6 (3) A MEMBER APPOINTED TO FILL A VACANCY IN AN UNEXPIRED TERM OR TO SUCCEED A  
7 MEMBER WHO IS HOLDING OVER SERVES ONLY FOR THE REMAINDER OF THAT TERM.

8 (E) *CHAIR.*

- 9 (1) THE COUNCIL MUST ELECT A CHAIR FROM AMONG ITS MEMBERS.
- 10 (2) THE TERM OF THE CHAIR IS 1 YEAR.
- 11 (3) THE CHAIR MAY BE REELECTED.

12 (F) *VICE CHAIR.*

- 13 (1) THE COUNCIL MUST ELECT A VICE CHAIR FROM AMONG ITS MEMBERS.
- 14 (2) THE TERM OF THE VICE CHAIR IS 1 YEAR.
- 15 (3) THE VICE CHAIR MAY BE REELECTED.

16 (G) *SECRETARY.*

- 17 (1) THE COUNCIL MUST ELECT A SECRETARY FROM AMONG ITS MEMBERS.
- 18 (2) THE TERM OF THE SECRETARY IS 1 YEAR.
- 19 (3) THE SECRETARY MAY BE REELECTED.

20 (H) *MEETINGS; QUORUM.*

- 21 (1) THE COUNCIL MUST MEET AT LEAST MONTHLY.
- 22 (2) A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTES A QUORUM FOR THE  
23 TRANSACTION OF COUNCIL BUSINESS.

**Council Bill 23-0416**

1     **§ 59-7. RESERVED.**

2     **§ 59-8. STAFF AND BUDGET.**

3         (A) *STAFF.*

4             THE OFFICE MAY EMPLOY STAFF IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORDINANCE OF ESTIMATES.

5         (B) *BUDGET.*

6             THE OFFICE MAY EXPEND FUNDS AUTHORIZED IN THE ORDINANCE OF ESTIMATES, ANY  
7             SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS, OR ANY APPROPRIATIONS TRANSFER.

8     **§ 59-9. DUTIES OF THE OFFICE.**

9             IN COLLABORATION AND CONSULTATION WITH THE COUNCIL, THE OFFICE MUST:

- 10             (1) SERVE AS AN ADVOCATE FOR RETURNING CITIZENS;
- 11             (2) COORDINATE AND MONITOR SERVICE DELIVERY TO RETURNING CITIZENS;
- 12             (3) PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELFARE, EMPOWERMENT, AND REINTEGRATION OF  
13             RETURNING CITIZENS IN THE AREAS OF:
- 14                     (I) EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT;
- 15                     (II) HEALTH CARE;
- 16                     (III) EDUCATION;
- 17                     (IV) HOUSING; AND
- 18                     (V) SOCIAL SERVICES;
- 19             (4) DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIPS AND COORDINATE WITH FEDERAL, STATE, AND  
20             PRIVATE AGENCIES WORKING WITH RETURNING CITIZENS;
- 21             (5) DEVELOP AND PROPOSE CITY POLICY REGARDING ISSUES AFFECTING RETURNING  
22             CITIZENS;
- 23             (6) PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC HEARINGS;
- 24             (7) PROMOTE COMMUNITY DIALOGUE CONCERNING THE ISSUES CONFRONTING RETURNING  
25             CITIZENS; AND

**Council Bill 23-0416**

(8) REVIEW, COMMENT, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS THAT WILL AFFECT RETURNING CITIZENS.

**§ 59-10. ANNUAL REPORT.**

ON OR BEFORE JUNE 30 OF EACH YEAR, THE OFFICE MUST SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DETAILING:

- (1) THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE AND THE COUNCIL; AND
- (2) SPECIFIC POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS TO PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELFARE, EMPOWERMENT, AND REINTEGRATION OF BALTIMORE’S RETURNING CITIZENS.

**Article 8. Ethics**

**Subtitle 7. Financial Disclosure**

***Part II. Who Must File***

**§ 7-8. Persons required to file – Agency officials and staff.**

The following officials and employees must file the financial disclosure statements required by this subtitle:

...

**(38A) *RE-ENTRY ACTION COUNCIL***

- (I) DIRECTOR.
- (II) MEMBERS OF THE RE-ENTRY ACTION COUNCIL.
- (III) ALL NON-CLERICAL EMPLOYEES.

**(38B) [(38a)] *South Baltimore Gateway Community Impact District Management Authority.***

- (i) Members of the Board of Directors.
- (ii) Administrator.
- (iii) All non-clerical employees assigned to the Commission.

**SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30<sup>th</sup> day after the date it is enacted.

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
COMMITTEE**

**23-0416  
AGENCY REPORTS  
Baltimore City Office of  
Returning Citizens**

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CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT,  
Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW  
EBONY M. THOMPSON,  
ACTING CITY SOLICITOR  
100 N. HOLLIDAY STREET  
SUITE 101, CITY HALL  
BALTIMORE, MD 21202

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December 12, 2023

The Honorable President and Members  
of the Baltimore City Council  
Attn: Executive Secretary  
Room 409, City Hall  
100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

RE: City Council Bill 23-0416 – Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens

Dear President and Members

You have requested the advice of the Law Department regarding City Council Bill 23-0416. City Council Bill 23-0416 would create the Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens, define certain terms, provide for the appointment of the Director of the Office, establish the duties of the Office, provide for the staff and budget of the Office, establish the Re-Entry Action Council, provide for the appointment, structure and governance of the Council, require the Director, Council members and staff of the Office to file financial disclosure statements under the Ethics Code and require the Office to submit an annual report to the Mayor and City Council (“MCCB”).

Baltimore City Charter § 1(a) of Article VII, provides that “the executive power of the City is vested in the Mayor, the City Administrator, the departments, commissions and boards provided for in this article and the special officers, departments, commissions and boards that may be created by law.” Charter, Art. VII, §1(a). Section 2(a) of Article VII allows for ordinances to give additional duties to “a department, officer, commission, board or other municipal agency” so long as those duties are “consistent with the Charter and subject to the supervision of a superior municipal officer or agency.” Clearly and by ordinance, these Charter provisions give the City Council the power to create a department or office.

Pursuant to Baltimore City Charter Article IV, § 4 the Mayor is the “chief executive officer of the City and shall see that ordinances and resolutions are duly and faithfully executed” and “subject to more specific provisions of the Charter, the Mayor shall have general responsibility for the economic development of the City.” This gives the Mayor’s office the ability to provide for certain programs subject to the Charter’s grant of power to departments, commissions, and/or boards. With respect to the legislative authority of the City Council, the Md. Constitution, Art. XI, §3 provides that “from and after the adoption of a charter by the City of Baltimore, or any County of this State, as hereinbefore provided, the Mayor of Baltimore and City Council of the City of

Baltimore or the County Council of said County, subject to the Constitution and Public General Laws of this State, shall have full power to enact local laws of said City or County including the power to repeal or amend local laws of said City or County enacted by the General Assembly, upon all matters covered by the express powers granted ....”

From the above-referenced provisions, it can be gleaned that a department, board or commission may be created by laws other than the Charter but in order for the City Council to do this by ordinance, the power to provide for the purpose of the office must also be within the express powers of the MCCB; powers which have been granted to it by the General Assembly or granted by Public Local law. There is no specific authority in the City’s Express Powers i.e., Art. II of the Charter or in Public Local law to provide for the purpose of the Office which is to advise the MCCB on issues relating to returning citizens and to advocate for returning citizens.

However, the Charter does grant the MCCB the power to have and exercise within the limits of Baltimore City all the power commonly known as the Police Power to the same extent as the State has or could exercise that power within the limits of Baltimore City. Hence, “the power to pass any ordinance not inconsistent with the provisions of the Charter or the laws of the State, which it may deem proper in the exercise of any of the powers, either express or implied, enumerated in this Charter, as well as any ordinance as it may deem proper in maintaining the peace, good government, health and welfare of Baltimore City...” See Charter Article II §47. Providing for an office to act as a liaison between the City government and members of the community commonly referred to as “Returning Citizens”, is within the scope of these powers.

The Law department notes the following technical amendment to the bill:  
-Page 2, Line 3. Subtitle 58 should be Subtitle 59.

With the required technical amendment and based on the foregoing analysis, this bill is consistent with the Charter authority of the City Council. As such, the Law Department can approve the bill for form and legal sufficiency.

Very truly yours,



Teresa Epps Cummings

cc: Ebony M. Thompson, Acting City Solicitor  
Stephen Salsbury, Deputy City Solicitor  
Matthew Bradford, Chief of Staff  
Elena R. DiPietro, Practice Group Chief  
Natawna B. Austin, Baltimore City Council  
Nina Themelis, Mayor’s Office of Government Relations  
Tiffany A. Maclin, Deputy Director, Legislative

**AMENDMENTS TO COUNCIL BILL 23-0416  
(1<sup>st</sup> Reader Copy)**

By: Law Department

{To be offered to the Public Safety and Government Operations Committee}

**Amendment No. 1**

On page 2, in line 3, strike “**58.**” and substitute “**59.**”.



**CITY COUNCIL BILL: 23-0416**  
**BILL REPORT**  
**BALTIMORE CITY OFFICE OF**  
**RETURNING CITIZENS**

**TO:** The Honorable Nick Mosby, President, Baltimore City Council  
**FROM:** Dana Petersen Moore, Director, Office of Equity and Civil Rights  
**THRU:** Nina Themelis, Director, Mayor's Office of Government Relations  
**ANALYST:** Dana Petersen Moore, Director, Office of Equity and Civil Rights and  
Baltimore City Chief Equity Officer  
**DATE:** February 26, 2024  
**POSITION:** **Favorable**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR) has reviewed and is herein reporting on City Council Bill 23-0416 – Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens. The bill establishes a Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens, defines terms related to the office, provides for the appointment of the Director of the Office, establishes the duties of the office, provides for the office's staff and budget, establishes the "Re-Entry Action Council", provides for the appointment, structure and governance of the Council, requires the Director, Council members and staff of the Office to file financial disclosures, and requires that the Office submit an annual report to the Mayor and City Council.

Further, the bill adds Article 1, sections 59-1 through 5910 to the Baltimore City Code (Edition 2000), and repeals and re-ordains with amendments Article 8, Section 7-8(38a) of the Baltimore City Code (Edition 2000).

### **IMPACT OF THE BILL**

The proposed legislation will address the growing needs of Baltimore's significant number of returning citizens. Serving as a central location for a full array of critical resources, the Office of Returning Citizens will likely play an impactful role in creating employment opportunities, addressing health needs, serving as a resource for housing, and assisting with creating pathways to addressing the negative impacts of incarceration. This in turn will help decrease the rate of recidivism, and help returning citizens and their families adjust to life in the Baltimore community.

### **ANALYSIS**

Council Bill 23-0416 seeks to establish a new office that is focused on addressing the needs of formerly incarcerated persons. The bill is expansive in that the definition of "returning citizen" includes persons who have been involved in the judicial system, but never incarcerated.





**CITY COUNCIL BILL: 23-0416**  
**BILL REPORT**  
**BALTIMORE CITY OFFICE OF**  
**RETURNING CITIZENS**

**EQUITY ANALYSIS**

Council Bill 23-0416 addresses the needs of an underserved population. Does so in a manner that does not take away or interrupt services or benefits to any other demographic. The bill is absent of any apparent or perceived inequitable effect or impact.

**CONCLUSION**

The Office of Equity and Civil Rights supports a **favorable** committee report on City Council Bill 23-0416.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dana Petersen Moore

<b>FROM</b>	<b>NAME &amp; TITLE</b>	Laura Larsen, Budget Director	CITY of <b>BALTIMORE</b> <b>MEMO</b>	
	<b>AGENCY NAME &amp; ADDRESS</b>	Bureau of the Budget and Management Research Room 469, City Hall		
	<b>SUBJECT</b>	City Council Bill 23-0416 – Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens		

DATE:

**TO**

The Honorable President and  
Members of the City Council  
City Hall, Room 400

February 26, 2024

**Position: Does Not Oppose**

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 23-0416, Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens, the purpose of which is to establish a Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens and the Re-Entry Action Council. The Office of Returning Citizens will be responsible for advocating for returning citizens; coordinating and monitoring service delivery that promotes general welfare, empowerment, and reintegration of returning citizens; collaborating with Federal, State, and private agency stakeholders; participating in public hearings; providing input on and developing legislation and policies that will impact returning citizens; and developing and submitting an annual report to the Mayor and City Council. The Re-Entry Action Council will be responsible for advising the Office, Mayor, and City Council on issues relating to returning citizens and collaborating and consulting with the Office on matters relating to the discharge of the Office’s duties.

**Background**

The proposed legislation seeks to create a new office within the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE) that will be responsible for advocating for returning citizens; coordinating and monitoring service delivery to returning citizens; promoting the general welfare, empowerment, and reintegration of returning citizens; developing sustainable relationships and coordinating with Federal, State, and private agencies that work with returning citizens; developing and proposing City policy; participating in public hearings; promoting community dialogue on related issues; providing input on legislation and policies that will impact returning citizens; and developing and submitting an annual report to the Mayor and City Council.

Currently, MONSE administers grant programming to provide case management and safe return planning for returning citizens. These services are provided in partnership with the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and are funded through MONSE’s \$50 million American Rescue Plan Act award. MONSE also partners with DPSCS to provide the Returning Citizens Behind the Wall program, which provides job training and paid employment opportunities for returning citizens. This program is also supported by MONSE’s violence prevention and community intervention APRA award.

The proposed legislation also seeks to create a Re-Entry Action Council that will be responsible for advising the Office, Mayor, and City Council on issues relating to returning citizens and collaborating and consulting with the Office on matters relating to the discharge of the Office’s duties.

**Fiscal Impact**

The Department of Finance anticipates a total cost of \$159,704 to enact this legislation. The proposed legislation requires establishment of a Director position that will be responsible for administration and

oversight of the Office. Based on discussions with MONSE, the Community Engagement and Opportunity Associate Director position, currently supported by MONSE’s ARPA award, would direct the Office. ARPA support for this position will end on December 31, 2024. Thus, support for this position would transition to the General Fund during Fiscal 2025.

There is no additional General Fund impact anticipated from this legislation because funding for new positions and programming is subject to approval as part of the annual budget process.

**Other Considerations**

There are three additional factors that City Council should consider when reviewing this legislation. First, discussions with MONSE yielded an estimated cost of \$4.80 million to support an Office that provides a comprehensive range of programming supported by seven additional positions. The table below details the total personnel and non-personnel costs associated with this model:

<b>Expense</b>	<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Personnel	7	\$820,514
Non-Personnel	-	\$3,984,248
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>\$4,804,762</b>

*Personnel*

Finance anticipates that the Office would require seven newly funded positions supported by General Funds. Based on analysis by MONSE, the seven additional positions will be needed to manage the Office and implement coordination and delivery of services to returning citizens in the areas of: employment and career development; health care; education; housing; and social services. These positions include: a Re-Entry Deputy Director; a Navigator; a Career Navigator; two Housing Locators; and two Case Managers. Currently, the Re-Entry Deputy Director, which is supported by ARPA funding, assists in managing MONSE’s re-entry programming and partnerships. This analysis assumes that this position will transition to General Fund funding in future years. This staffing model assumes that administrative support would be provided by current HR and Fiscal personnel within MONSE. Total projected Fiscal 2025 personnel costs for these positions are outlined in the table below:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Re-Entry Deputy Director	\$147,312
Navigator	\$110,135
Career Navigator	\$110,135
Housing Locator (2)	\$220,270
Case Manager (2)	\$232,662
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$820,514</b>

*Non-personnel*

Finance anticipates costs for general operations, including BCIT hardware and software, as well as costs related to coordination and provision of services. The total estimated cost of coordination and provision of services is \$3.98 million. Based on analysis by MONSE, these costs would be related to: relocation of returning citizens; basic furnishing of returning citizen’s residences; hoteling and providing basic necessities and transportation to returning citizens awaiting location of permanent housing; Returning Citizens Behind the Wall programming; job training programming; and transitional employment programs. This analysis assumes that the Returning Citizens Behind the Wall programming will transition

from support by ARPA funds to General Funds. There is no anticipated service impact from this change. Total costs related to general operations and services are detailed in the table below:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Relocation	\$1,400,000
Furniture	\$250,000
Hoteling	\$280,000
Returning Citizens Behind the Wall	\$650,000
Job Training Programming	\$125,000
Transitional Employment	\$1,275,000
BCIT Hardware	\$1,952
BCIT Software	\$2,296
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,984,248</b>

Second, Finance anticipates that some of the estimated costs related to the proposed Office may have no General Fund impact and will instead be supported by grant funding. However, due to the expiration of ARPA these costs will have to be picked up by the General Fund, or other grants if available. Due to the unpredictability of the frequency and value of grant awards, it is too difficult to factor this into Finance's cost estimate.

Third, successful implementation of the support services proposed by MONSE may produce benefits to the City and residents. Although it is difficult to project the cost savings related to less recidivism, a 2007 cost-benefit analysis by the Urban Institute, which examined the Maryland Reentry Partnership Initiative, estimated that a reentry program produced \$3 in benefits per dollar in costs. Benefits primarily impacted private citizens by decreasing the number and severity of crimes and impacted by City agencies by decreasing the costs dedicated to resources related to investigating crimes and arresting offenders.

### **Conclusion**

City Council Bill 23-0416, Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens proposes to create an Office of Returning Citizens and Re-Entry Action Council to enhance the City's re-entry services for citizens returning from incarceration. This Office has potential to provide important services to vulnerable residents as well as improve public safety across the City.

Finance is supportive of this legislation, but concerned about the costs. Although the cost of enacting the legislation is minimal, building out an Office with more robust functions supported by General Funds poses a challenge with the City's current fiscal constraints.

**For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance does not oppose City Council Bill 23-0416.**

cc: Michael Mocksten  
Nina Themelis

CITY OF BALTIMORE

Stefanie Mavronis  
Director



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD  
SAFETY AND ENGAGEMENT

2700 Rayner Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21216  
[monse.baltimorecity.gov](http://monse.baltimorecity.gov)

February 27, 2024

The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council  
City Hall, Room 409  
100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: City Council Bill 23-0416 – Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens

Dear Council President Mosby and Members of the City Council,

The Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE) has reviewed Council Bill 23-0416, which creates the Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens and establishes Baltimore's first Re-Entry Action Council (RAC) to be overseen by the Office. The bill would institutionalize MONSE's current re-entry work and help to expand and sustain the City's capacity to serve individuals returning from incarceration.

The Office of Returning Citizens would be housed within MONSE and focus on coordinating services, developing support networks, and advocating for Baltimoreans re-entering society. Re-entry work focuses on supporting returning citizens and preventing re-offense. Ensuring that returning citizens have the services and supports needed to successfully re-enter society is a crucial component of efforts to reduce recidivism and improve public safety, breaking the vicious cycle of poverty, crime, and mass incarceration. The success of returning citizens is a benefit for all Baltimoreans, and it is vital that the work starts prior to release.

MONSE has begun laying the foundation for this work with the implementation of re-entry programs including the Returning Citizens Behind The Wall (RCBTW) initiative, an ARPA-funded partnership between MONSE and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) which provides training and paid employment for people preparing to return to their communities, along with wraparound support and services prior to and upon their return. RCBTW connects individuals who are incarcerated and eligible for work release with \$15/hour

CITY OF BALTIMORE

Stefanie Mavronis  
Director



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD  
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employment with Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (BCRP). The program also provides participants with career training and counseling in financial management and conflict resolution, among other services. RCBTW currently has 24 active participants, and a total of 103 individuals have participated in RCBTW since the program's soft launch in Spring 2023.

Baltimore's first Re-Entry Action Council (RAC) is overseen by MONSE and is tasked with coordinating with government agencies and community-based organizations around Baltimore's Re-Entry Continuum of Care. The Council has 25 members and meets bi-monthly; the first meet was held in January 2024. The RAC focuses on collaborating with partners including the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) to implement evidence-based practices to assist returning citizens and reduce recidivism among formerly incarcerated Baltimoreans. To that end, the Council meets monthly and aims to ensure seamless coordination of services to address and reduce barriers for returning citizens.

The total projected budget for the Office is \$5 million, which includes funding for eight full-time staff positions (Community Engagement and Opportunity Associate Director, Re-Entry Deputy Director, Navigator, Career Navigator, two Housing Locators, and two Case Administrators); and transitional job employment, job training, rent stipends, and safe return planning for up to 250 returning citizens per year. MONSE is exploring all funding opportunities including foundation grants as well as state and federal dollars for long term sustainability.

This legislation will help to enhance and codify current re-entry efforts under a dedicated office within MONSE, building on the progress to date and reaffirming the City's commitment to supporting Baltimore's returning citizens. For this reason, we respectfully request a **favorable** report on City Council Bill 23-0416.

Sincerely,

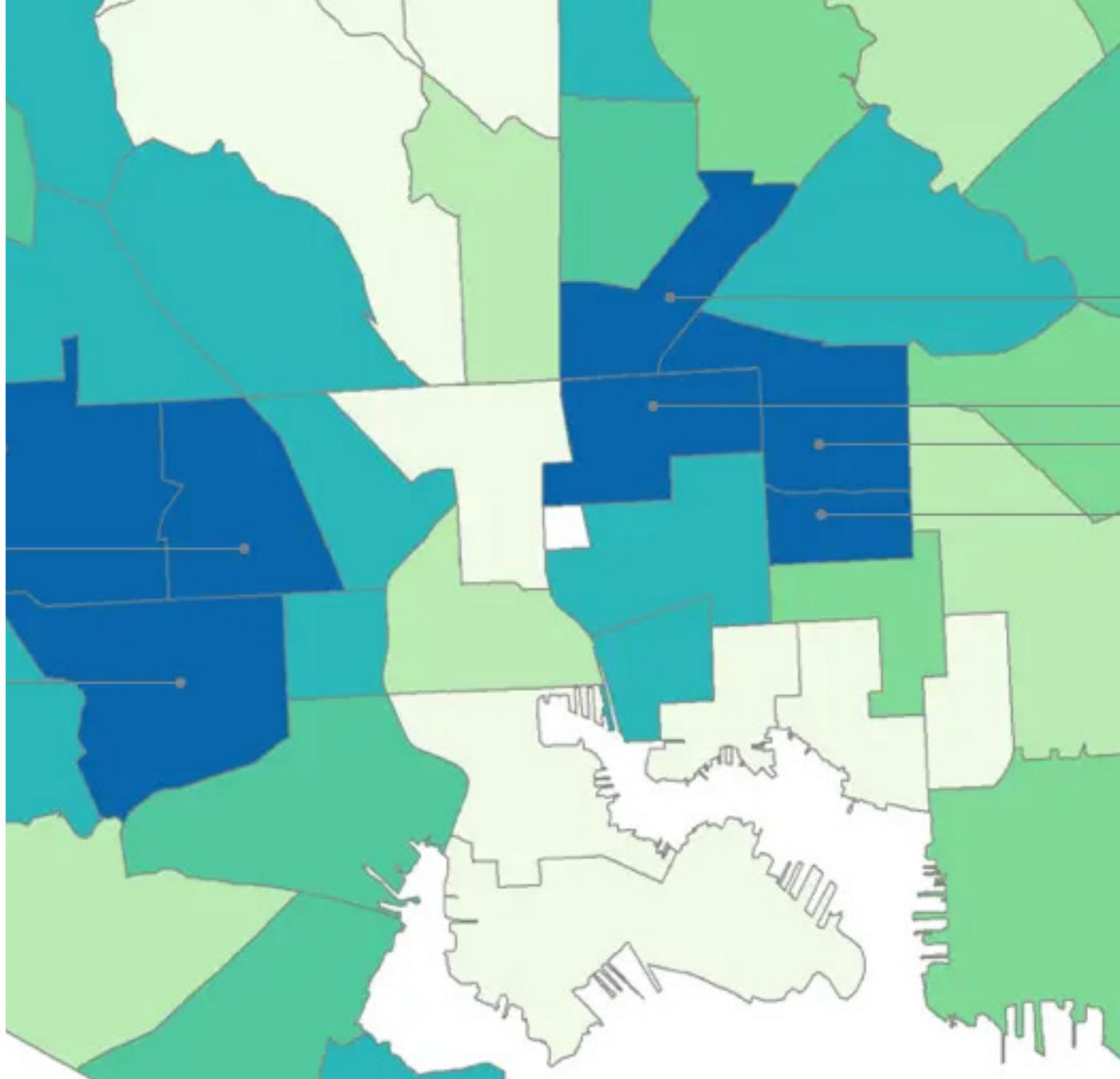
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stefanie Mavronis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "S".

Stefanie Mavronis  
Director

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
COMMITTEE**

**23-0416**

**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS  
Baltimore City Office of  
Returning Citizens**



## WHERE PEOPLE IN PRISON COME FROM:

The Geography of Mass  
Incarceration in Maryland



## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the Redistricting Data Hub, particularly Peter Horton, for providing valuable technical expertise and the key data in the appendix tables. Redistricting Data Hub's assistance processing the redistricting data and connecting us with other demographic data enabled us to produce and distribute these reports faster and more affordably than would otherwise have been possible.

## About the organizations

Founded in 1997, the Justice Policy Institute (JPI) is a nonprofit organization developing workable solutions to problems plaguing the juvenile and criminal legal systems. JPI envisions a society with safe, equitable, and healthy communities; just and effective solutions to social problems; and the use of incarceration only as a last resort. For over 20 years, JPI has been engaged in criminal legal reform efforts in Maryland, generating over two dozen publications on Maryland's correctional challenges.

The non-profit, non-partisan Prison Policy Initiative produces cutting-edge research that exposes the broader harm of mass criminalization and sparks advocacy campaigns that create a more just society. In 2002, the organization launched the national movement against prison gerrymandering when it showed that the way the Census Bureau counts incarcerated people — as residents of a prison cell, instead of at their homes — distorts our democracy and dilutes the voices of people who do not live near prisons. Since then, over a dozen states, including Maryland, have used Prison Policy Initiative's research to end prison gerrymandering. Roughly half of the country now lives in a place that has formally rejected prison gerrymandering.

# THE GEOGRAPHY OF MASS INCARCERATION IN MARYLAND

One of the most important criminal legal system disparities has long been difficult to decipher: Which communities throughout the state do incarcerated people come from? Anyone who lives in or works within heavily policed and incarcerated communities intuitively knows that certain neighborhoods disproportionately experience incarceration. But data have rarely been available to quantify how many people from each community are imprisoned with any real precision.<sup>1</sup>

But now, thanks to a redistricting reform [link to sidebar at end re: legislation] that ensures incarcerated people are counted correctly in the legislative districts they come from, we can understand the geography of incarceration in Maryland with up-to-date data. Maryland is [one of over a dozen states](#) that have ended [prison gerrymandering](#), and now count incarcerated people where they legally reside — at their home address — rather than in remote prison cells for redistricting purposes. This type of reform, as we often discuss, is crucial for ending the siphoning of political power from disproportionately Black and Latino communities to pad out the mostly rural, predominantly white regions where prisons are located. And when reforms like Maryland's are implemented, they bring along a convenient side effect: In order to correctly represent each community's population counts, states must collect detailed state-wide data on where imprisoned people call home, which is otherwise impossible to access.

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<sup>1</sup> Criminal justice data is often poorly tracked, meaning researchers must cobble together information from different sources. But by using complete data from state redistricting committees, this report (and the series of state reports it belongs to) are uniquely comprehensive and up-to-date. [This series of reports](#), which are each published by Prison Policy Initiative in cooperation with various state partners, includes two previous reports: [Maryland](#) (published in 2015, in collaboration with the [Justice Policy Institute](#)) and [New York](#) (published in 2020, in collaboration with [VOCAL-NY](#)). While the reports in this series are the first to use redistricting data to provide detailed, local-level data on where incarcerated people come from statewide, other organizations have previously published reports that focused on individual cities or that provided data across fewer types of geographic areas. For example, the [Justice Mapping Center](#) had a project that showed residence data for people admitted to or released from state prisons in a given year for almost two dozen states. That project made those states' annual admission and release data available at the zip code and census tract levels, most recently mapping 2008-2010 data. Separately, it also [mapped the residences of people admitted to state prisons](#) from New York City down to the block level using 2009 data. Another resource (particularly helpful for states that are not included in our series of reports) is Vera Institute for Justice's [Incarceration Trends project](#), which maps prison incarceration rates for 40 states at the county level, based on county of commitment (meaning where individuals were convicted and committed to serve a sentence, not necessarily where they lived).

Using this redistricting data, we found that **in Maryland, incarcerated people come from all over the state, but are disproportionately from Baltimore City.** Looking at local data, we also find that some areas of the state — like the southern Eastern Shore and Hagerstown — are also disproportionately affected by incarceration. While Maryland incarcerates a smaller share of its residents [than all but 13 U.S. states](#), examining these data by county, city, and even neighborhood reveals surprising and troubling patterns of high incarceration in both specific communities within Baltimore and also the smaller and historically under-resourced Eastern Shore communities.

In addition to helping policy makers and advocates effectively bring reentry and diversion resources to these communities, this data has far-reaching implications. Around the country, high imprisonment rates are correlated with other community problems related to poverty, employment, education, and health. Researchers, scholars, advocates, and politicians can use the data in this report to advocate for bringing more resources to their communities.

### More than 1% of Baltimore City's population is locked up in state prison



9% of Maryland residents call Baltimore home, but **40% of Maryland residents in state prison are from the city.**

## 9 detailed tables to help you find incarceration data from your community

We created 9 different tables, each breaking down Maryland's population into different types of communities (such as counties or Census tracts). Each table shows the number of people from each community known to be in the state's prisons at the time of the 2020 Census.

Statewide, local imprisonment data are available for:

- [Counties](#)
- [Select cities and towns](#)
- [ZIP codes](#)
- [Census tracts](#)
- [State House of Delegates districts](#)
- [State Senate districts](#)
- [Congressional districts](#)

In Baltimore, we break down local imprisonment data by:

[Baltimore Community statistical areas<sup>1</sup>](#)

In Montgomery County, we break down local imprisonment data by:

[County-wide neighborhoods](#)

This unique data source makes it possible to study imprisonment rates directly (rather than relying on prison admission and release data), and at more useful levels of analysis than just the county or zip code. Community advocates and policymakers can use these data to examine how incarceration impacts the communities they serve, as well as advocate for and inform decisions about changes that will best serve the needs of people in these communities.

<sup>1</sup> The Baltimore Data Collaborative and the Baltimore City Department of Planning divided Baltimore into 55 Community Statistical Areas (CSAs). These 55 units combine Census Bureau geographies together in ways that match Baltimore's understanding of community boundaries, and are used in social planning. For the purposes of this report, we are using CSAs to analyze imprisonment data at the neighborhood level.

## Incarcerated people come from all over Maryland — but disproportionately from some places more than others.

Most broadly, we find that people in Maryland prisons come from every corner of the state. Every single county in the state — and every state legislative district — is missing a portion of its population to incarceration in state prison. The idea that incarceration is a problem uniquely experienced in cities is a myth. While it is true that Baltimore has a disproportionately high incarceration rate, residence data shows it is not alone in this regard. A number of less populous areas, including Wicomico, Dorchester, and Somerset counties on the Eastern Shore,<sup>2</sup> rank in the top fifth of Maryland counties when it comes to prison incarceration rates with over 570 people in state prison for every 100,000 county residents. Compared to the state-wide incarceration rate of 193 people for every 100,000 residents, these three Eastern Shore counties are losing relatively large portions of their populations to state prisons.<sup>3</sup>

While incarceration affects every part of the state, it tends to be concentrated in a relatively small number of geographic areas. For example, while **9% of Maryland residents call Baltimore home, 40% of Maryland residents in state prison are from the city.** By contrast, the most populous county in the state — Montgomery County — is home to 17% of Maryland residents, but only 4% of the state prison hails from this county.

Even within communities, the data show dramatic and troubling differences in incarceration rates between neighborhoods. Over one third of people in state prison from Baltimore City hail from just ten of the city's 55 neighborhoods.<sup>4</sup> The neighborhood of Midtown had an incarceration rate of 262 people in state prison per 100,000 neighborhood residents, while Southwest Baltimore had an incarceration rate **eight times higher** at 2,223 people in state prison per 100,000 residents.

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2 This area of the Eastern Shore is primarily rural and agricultural. According to [Census 2020 data](#), there is a significant population of Black residents in these counties, and there is also likely to be a significant population of seasonal workers. For example, Somerset County's population is 39% Black, while only 30% of Maryland's statewide population is Black.

3 As explained in the methodology, this report's incarceration rate is based on the number of people in state prison who were reallocated to individual communities as part of the state's law ending prison gerrymandering. This number is necessary for making apples-to-apples comparisons of incarceration between specific communities and the state as a whole. For the purposes of comparing incarceration in Maryland with that of other states, other more common metrics would be more useful. For these other uses, we would recommend using other numbers for the statewide incarceration rate, likely either the 258 per 100,000 published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in [Prisoners in 2020](#) for the number of people in state prison per 100,000 residents, or our more holistic number of 531 per 100,000 residents used in [States of Incarceration: The Global Context 2021](#) that includes people in state prisons, federal prisons, local jails, youth confinement, and all other forms of incarceration.

4 For the purposes of this analysis of city-wide trends by neighborhood, we used Community Statistical Areas (CSAs), described in footnote 2, to approximate neighborhoods. The CSAs solve a difficult problem for people who study communities: neighborhoods are fluid, and statistical data is often collected in ways that are incompatible with shifting or ill-defined boundaries. For example, the City of Baltimore has over 270 neighborhoods, but the boundaries of those neighborhoods do not necessarily match the Census Bureau's community boundaries and have a wide range of populations, making it hard to accurately analyze and compare these geographies. For these reasons, throughout this report, we are using the 55 Baltimore Community Statistical Areas to approximate neighborhoods.

While all communities are missing some of their members to imprisonment, in places where large numbers of adults — parents, workers, voters — are locked up, incarceration has a broader community impact. The large number of adults drained from a relatively small number of geographical areas seriously impacts the health and stability of the families and communities left behind.<sup>5</sup>

## What are the differences between high- and low-incarceration communities?

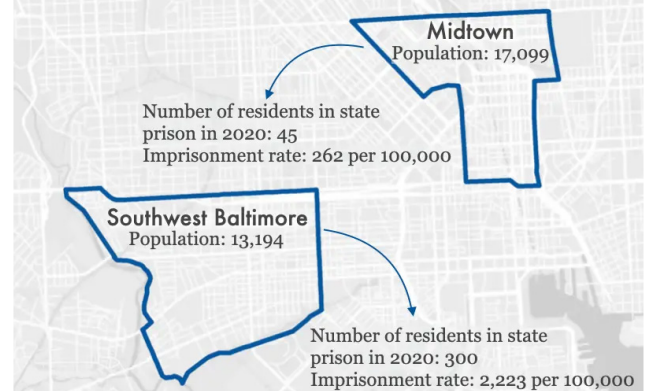
We already know that communities with high incarceration rates simultaneously tend to face other negative outcomes. In our analysis of the previous decade's data on [where incarcerated people in Maryland are from](#), we found that Baltimore communities with high rates of incarceration were more likely to have high unemployment rates, long average commute times, low household income, a high percentage of residents with less than a high school diploma or GED, decreased life expectancy, high rates of vacant or abandoned properties, and higher rates of children with elevated blood-lead levels, compared to neighborhoods less impacted by incarceration.

JPI plans to produce a report in late 2022 that will present a deeper dive on these and other social indicators using Maryland data. National research has revealed similar correlations in communities around the country:<sup>6</sup>

**Life expectancy:** A 2021 analysis of New York State census tracts found that tracts with the highest incarceration rates had an average life expectancy [more than two years shorter](#) than tracts with the lowest incarceration rates, even when controlling for other population differences.<sup>7</sup> And a [2019 analysis](#) of counties across the country revealed that higher levels of incarceration are associated with both higher morbidity (poor or fair health) and mortality (shortened life expectancy).

### Even two miles apart, neighborhood experiences of incarceration vary greatly

In Baltimore, the imprisonment rate for residents of Southwest Baltimore is *eight times higher* than for residents of Midtown.



Despite their geographic proximity, these two neighborhoods in Baltimore experience vastly different rates of incarceration: people in Southwest Baltimore are **8 times more likely** to be imprisoned than residents of Midtown.

5 These impacts of incarceration on families and communities include higher rates of disease and infant mortality, housing instability, and financial burdens related to having an incarcerated loved one. For more detailed information on how incarceration impacts families and communities, see [On life support: Public health in the age of mass incarceration](#) from the Vera Institute of Justice.

6 These various correlative findings are once again in line with previous research on health disparities across communities, which have been linked to neighborhood factors such as [income inequality](#), [exposure to violence](#), and environmental hazards that disproportionately affect communities of color. Public health experts consider community-level factors such as these — including incarceration — “social determinants of health.” To counteract these problems, they suggest taking a broad approach, addressing the “upstream” economic and social disparities through policy reforms, as well as by increasing access to services and supports, such as improving access to clinical health care.

7 We also know that people who have been incarcerated have a [shorter life expectancy](#) than people who have not.



**Community health:** A nationwide study, published in 2019, found that rates of incarceration were associated with a more than [50% increase in drug-related deaths](#) from county to county. And, a 2018 study found that Black people living in Atlanta neighborhoods with high incarceration rates are more likely to have [poor cardiometabolic health profiles](#).

An analysis of North Carolina data from 1995 to 2002 revealed that counties with increased incarceration rates had higher rates of both [teenage pregnancy](#) and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). A 2015 study of Atlanta also found that census tracts with higher rates of incarceration had [higher rates](#) of newly diagnosed STIs.<sup>8</sup>

**Mental health:** A [2015 study](#) found that people living in Detroit neighborhoods with high prison admission rates were more likely to be screened as having a current or lifetime major depressive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder.

**Exposure to environmental dangers:** A 2021 study found that people who grew up in U.S. census tracts with [higher levels of traffic-related air pollution and housing-derived lead risk](#) were more likely to be incarcerated as adults, even when controlling for other factors.

In New York City, neighborhood incarceration rate is [associated with asthma prevalence](#) among adults. Similarly, our 2020 analysis of New York City neighborhoods found higher rates of [asthma among children](#) in communities with high incarceration rates.<sup>9</sup>

**Education:** In our 2020 analysis of incarcerated New Yorkers' neighborhoods of origin, we found a [strong correlation](#) between neighborhood imprisonment rates and standardized test scores.<sup>10</sup> And a [2017 report](#) on incarceration in Worcester, Mass., found that schools in the city's high-incarceration neighborhoods tended to be lower-performing. What's more, students in those neighborhoods faced more disciplinary infractions.

**Community Resources and Engagement:** A 2018 study found that, throughout the country, people who are formerly incarcerated (as well as people who have been arrested or convicted of a crime) are more likely than their non-justice-involved counterparts to live in a census tract with [low access to healthy food retailers](#). And the 2017 report on Worcester,

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8 There are many additional studies linking incarceration rates and high community rates of STIs, including [gonorrhea](#) and [chlamydia](#) in North Carolina.

9 Asthma prevalence has been used as a tool to measure population health in both sociological and public health research because it is easily correlated with environmental factors like air quality and triggers (i.e. second hand smoke, mold, dust, cockroaches, dust mites), as well as access to appropriate healthcare and healthcare literacy. See the American Lung Association's [Public Policy Position](#) for a literature review of the relevant public health research.

10 Again, this finding is consistent with previous research on the relationship between education and imprisonment rates. We previously reported that the high school educations of [over half of all formerly incarcerated people were cut short](#). This is in line with earlier studies showing that people in prison have markedly lower educational attainment, literacy, and numeracy than the general public, and are more likely to have learning disabilities. We also know there are [relationships](#) between [parental incarceration](#) and educational performance.

Mass., revealed that high-incarceration neighborhoods had [lower voter turnout](#) in municipal elections.

Maryland residents can use the data in this report to examine granular local-level and state-wide correlations and choose to allocate needed resources to places hardest hit by incarceration.

## Implications & uses of these data

The [9 data tables provided here](#) have great potential for community advocacy and future research.

First and most obviously, these data can be used to determine the best locations for [community-based diversion programs](#) that help prevent involvement with the criminal legal system, such as offices of neighborhood safety and mental health response teams located outside of police departments. The data can also help guide reentry services (which are typically provided by nonprofit community organizations) to areas of Maryland that need them most.

But even beyond the obvious need for diversion and reentry services, our findings also point to geographic areas that deserve greater investment in programs and services that indirectly prevent criminal legal involvement or mitigate the harm of incarceration. After all, decades of research show that imprisonment leads to [cascading collateral consequences](#), both for individuals and their loved ones. When large numbers of people disappear from a community, their absences are felt in countless ways. They leave behind [loved ones, including children](#), who experience trauma, emotional distress, and financial strain. Simultaneously, the large numbers of people returning to these communities (since the vast majority of incarcerated people who are incarcerated do return home) face a host of reentry challenges and [collateral consequences](#) resulting from their incarceration, including [difficulty finding employment](#) and a [lack of housing](#). People impacted by the justice system tend to have extremely [diminished wealth accumulation](#). And those returning from prison and jail may carry back to their communities [PTSD and other mental health issues](#) from the trauma they've experienced and [witnessed behind bars](#).

And since we know place of origin correlates with so many other metrics of wellbeing, we can and should target these communities for support and resources beyond what we typically think of as interventions to prevent criminal legal system contact. In communities where the state or city has heavily invested in policing and incarceration (i.e. the high-incarceration neighborhoods we find in our analysis), our findings suggest that those resources would be better put toward reducing poverty and improving local health, education, and employment opportunities.

For example, we know that large numbers of children in high incarceration areas may be growing up with the trauma and lost resources that come along with having an incarcerated parent, and that these children are also [more likely to experience incarceration](#). The information in this report can help with planning and targeting supports, resources, and programming designed to not only respond to the harms caused by incarceration, but disrupt the cycle of familial incarceration.

## About Maryland's law ending prison gerrymandering

This report uses the redistricting data produced by Maryland's historic 2010 law ending prison gerrymandering. "[Prison gerrymandering](#)" is the practice of drawing representative districts that count people in prison as legal residents of the prison, thereby inflating the political clout of people in districts with prisons, and diluting the influence of residents in all other districts. It is the result of a longstanding flaw in the U.S. Census, which counts incarcerated people as residents of their prison or jail cells on Census Day.

Ideally, the Census Bureau would update its methodology for this era of mass incarceration by counting imprisoned people at home. When the Bureau rejected calls to fix the problem for the 2010 Census, Maryland became the first state to develop and enact creative state-level legislative solutions to correct this flaw in the Census Bureau's data thus ending prison gerrymandering in Maryland.

This problem of "prison gerrymandering" was particularly stark in Maryland. At the time of the 2000 Census, an analysis the Prison Policy Initiative completed of Maryland's 2001 districts found that 18% of House of Delegates District 2B (near Hagerstown, where several large prisons are located) were incarcerated people. This meant every four residents of District 2B had almost as much influence as five residents of any other district in the state. In this way, before the law change, legislative districts with prisons

had a disproportionate impact in state politics.<sup>1</sup> But if prison gerrymandering seemed harmful to democracy in the state legislature, the problem was even larger for some of the Eastern Shore communities that hosted prisons. For example, over half the population of one County Commission District in Somerset County was incarcerated in 2000, giving each resident in that district 2.7 times as much influence as residents in other districts. Even more troubling is that by including the prison population as "residents" in county districts, the county has been unable to draw an effective majority-African American district and has had no African-American elected to county government, despite settlement of a vote dilution lawsuit in the 1980s.

Maryland's law to end prison gerrymandering ultimately passed with bipartisan support, including support from senators in both parties with prisons located in their districts. The law was affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court, upholding a lower court's analysis that "the State's adjusted data will likewise be more accurate than the information contained in the initial census reports, which does not take prisoners' community ties into account at all."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> People in prison remain residents of their home districts, but at redistricting time, they are assigned to the district where they are incarcerated. This skewed population assignment means that the more people in prison that are counted in a district, the fewer actual constituents the prison district legislator has, but is still allowed a full vote in the General Assembly. Therefore, people who live near prisons each get a stronger say in state government than people who live in a district without any of these "phantom constituents."

<sup>2</sup> Fletcher v. Lamone, 831 F. Supp. 2d 887, 897 (D. Md. 2011), aff'd, 567 U.S. 930 (2012).



We invite community organizers, service providers, policymakers, and researchers to use [the data tables](#) made available in this report to make further connections between mass incarceration and various outcomes, to better understand the impact of incarceration on their communities.

## Methodology & Data

This report capitalizes on the unique opportunity presented by Maryland's ending of prison gerrymandering, which allows us to determine accurately where people incarcerated in state prisons come from. In this report's [linked datasets](#), we aggregate this data by a number of useful state-wide geographies such as counties, legislative districts, and cities, and for some areas such as Baltimore neighborhoods and Montgomery County neighborhoods.

This section of the report discusses how we processed the data, some important context and limitations on that data, and some additional context about the geographies we have chosen to include in this report and appendices. The goal of this report is not to have the final word on the geographic concentration of incarceration, but to empower researchers and advocates — both inside and outside of the field of criminal justice research — to use our dataset for their own purposes. For example, if you are an expert on a particular kind of social disadvantage and have some data organized by county, zip code, legislative district, or other breakdown and want to add imprisonment data to your dataset, we probably have exactly what you need in a prepared appendix described below.

This report and its data are one in a series of similar reports we are releasing in the spring and summer of 2022, focusing on 13 states — California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington — which counted incarcerated people at home for redistricting purposes, and therefore also made this analysis possible. This report can also be seen as a template for other states because while not all states have ended prison gerrymandering, most state departments of corrections already have near-complete home residence records in an electronic format. States that have not yet ended prison gerrymandering should be encouraged to continue improving their data collection, and to share the data (under appropriate privacy protections) so that similar analyses could be performed.

### How we processed the data

Maryland's law ending prison gerrymandering required the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to share the home addresses of people in state prisons on Census Day 2020 with redistricting officials, so that these officials could remove imprisoned people from the redistricting populations reported by the Census for the facilities' locations and properly credit people to their home communities. The adjusted data was then made available for state and local officials to use to draw new legislative boundaries. As a side effect, this groundbreaking dataset allows researchers to talk in detail for the first time about where incarcerated people came from.

Creating the tables in this report required several steps which were expertly performed by Peter Horton at Redistricting Data Hub:

1. Downloading [Maryland's adjusted redistricting data](#), which contains the state's entire population, with the people incarcerated in state prisons reallocated to their home addresses.
2. Subtracting the state's redistricting data from the original Census Bureau P.L. 94-171 redistricting data, to produce a file that represented the number of incarcerated people the state determined were from each census block state-wide. (Census blocks that showed a net gain of population following the reallocation were the Census blocks that incarcerated people were reallocated to, and the amount of that change was the number of people from that block who were incarcerated in a state prison on Census day.) For a different analysis that focused on both the net gains and net decreases in individual census blocks and then aggregated to counties and the final redistricting plans, see Peter Horton's report for Redistricting Data Hub on [Maryland](#).
3. Aggregating these block-level counts of incarcerated people to each of the geography types available in the report. In cases where a census block containing an incarcerated person's home address straddles the boundary between two geographies, the incarcerated population was applied to the geography that contained the largest portion of the census block's area.
4. Calculating imprisonment rates for each geography, by first calculating a corrected population that shows the Census 2020 population plus the number of incarcerated people from that geography; and then dividing the number of incarcerated people by the corrected total population, and then multiplied it by 100,000 to get an imprisonment rate per 100,000.

### Important context and limitations on this data

Our analysis in this report documents the home addresses of 15,242 people in Maryland state prisons, which is somewhat less than the state's total prison population of 19,802 on Census day. These numbers are different for a variety of reasons, including policy choices made when the legislation ending prison gerrymandering was created and others are just the practical outcome of valiant state efforts to improve federal census data, or the process of repurposing that dataset for this entirely different project.

From the perspective of improving democracy in Maryland, the state's reallocation efforts were a success, reducing both the unearned enhancement of political representation in prison-hosting areas and reducing the dilution of representation in the highest-incarceration districts. From the perspective of using that data to discuss the concentration of incarceration, some readers may want to be aware of some the reasons why our report discusses the home addresses of 15,242 people when they may be aware that the state prison system had 19,802 people on Census day:

- Some people in Maryland state prisons are from other states and therefore were not reallocated to homes in Maryland.
- Some addresses were unknown or could not be located for the reallocation. For example, an address on file may be incomplete or may contain only the notation "homeless" which of course cannot be applied to a specific home census block.
- Anyone whose home address by coincidence happens to be in a census block that contains a correctional facility would have been properly reallocated for purposes of ending prison gerrymandering, but their presence at that location would not, because of how we created our dataset, be apparent in this report.

Similarly, this report doesn't reflect the other groups of people incarcerated from particular communities who are not reflected in these data, because they were:<sup>11</sup>

- Incarcerated in a federal prison, because states do not have the power to require home address data from federal agencies. The Maryland legislation requires the state to request this data from the federal Bureau of Prisons, but that federal agency refused to share it.
- Incarcerated in another state's prison system. States cannot require other states to share this information, and the fact that so many states are ending prison gerrymandering is too new of a phenomenon for them to have had the chance to enter into inter-state data sharing agreements.
- Incarcerated in a local jail, in this state or elsewhere; because the state's effort to remedy prison gerrymandering was focused on state prisons.

## About the geographies

We've organize [the data in this report](#) around several popular geographies, as defined by the federal government, by the state, or by individual cities, with the idea that the reader can link our data to the wealth of existing social indicator data already available from other sources.

Unfortunately, the reader may desire data for a specific geography that we have not made available — for example, their own neighborhood, as they conceive of its boundaries. Often, there was not a readily accessible and official map that we could use that defined that boundary; so where the reader has this need, we urge the reader to look for other geographies in our datasets that can be easily adapted to their needs, either one that is similar enough to their preferred geography or by aggregating several smaller geographies together to match your preferred geography.

We also want to caution subsequent users of this data that some geographies change frequently and others change rarely, so they should note the vintage of the maps we used to produce each table. For example, county boundaries change very rarely, and when they do, it is often in extremely small ways. On the other hand, legislative districts may change frequently and significantly, so depending on your goals some specific tables may be more or less applicable for your future use.

Finally, readers should note that occasionally the incarcerated numbers in our tables for some geographies will not sum precisely to the total 15,242 home addresses used in this report. That discrepancy arises because of how census blocks — the basic building block of legislative districts — nest or fail to nest within geographies drawn by agencies other than the Census Bureau.

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<sup>11</sup> This list of groups of people who could not be counted at home is yet another set of reasons why the U.S. Census Bureau is the ideal agency to end prison gerrymandering: they are the only party with the ability to provide a complete solution and they can do this work far more efficiently than the states can.

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# Census data reveals the burden of incarceration on Baltimore

While people in state prison come from all over Maryland, new Census data reveal the lopsided burden on some communities - the southern Eastern Shore, Hagerstown, and most acutely, Baltimore City.

The report, produced by the [Justice Policy Institute](#) and the [Prison Policy Initiative](#), is titled, "[Where people come from: The geography of mass incarceration in Maryland.](#)"

**Keith Wallington** of the [Justice Policy Institute](#) says the findings cast doubt on what is being done to prevent incarceration and reduce recidivism, "In many cases, individuals are going back to these same neighborhoods they come from, which are neighborhoods that have seen sustained investments in the justice system at the expense of other investments."

Check out data on the number of people in prison in 2020 from each [Maryland county](#) and from [Baltimore City neighborhoods](#).

Then, **Michael Harris** of the Baltimore re-entry program, [Face Inc.](#) - Freedom Advocates Celebrating Ex-Offenders - talks about the challenges that confront returning citizens. Harris is a recipient of a 2022 Weaver Award. Learn more [here](#).