

Introduced by: The Council President and President Young
At the request of: The Administration (Police Department)

*Castello, Middleton, pers. info
Stokes*

Prepared by: Department of Legislative Reference

Date: July 14, 2017

Referred to: JUDICIARY AND LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATIONS Committee

Also referred for recommendation and report to municipal agencies listed on reverse.

CITY COUNCIL 17-0111

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Weapons – Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly

FOR the purpose of prohibiting the wearing, carrying, or knowingly transporting of handguns near certain places of public assembly; creating certain exceptions; defining a certain term; establishing a certain mandatory penalty; setting a special effective date; and generally relating to handguns.

BY adding
Article 19 - Police Ordinances
Section(s) 59-5
Baltimore City Code
(Edition 2000)

Barry Jordan
Shannon M. [unclear]

Robert Stokes

C-T. [unclear]
Ernest [unclear]

****The introduction of an Ordinance or Resolution by Councilmembers at the request of any person, firm or organization is a courtesy extended by the Councilmembers and not an indication of their position.**

Agencies

<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Public Works	<input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore City Public School System
<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Real Estate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Baltimore Development Corporation
<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Recreation and Parks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Solicitor
<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comptroller's Office
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Department	<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Audits
<input type="checkbox"/> Health Department	<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Finance
<input type="checkbox"/> Mayor's Office of Employment Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Department of General Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Mayor's Office of Human Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Housing and Community Development
<input type="checkbox"/> Mayor's Office of Information Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Human Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Office of the Mayor	<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Planning
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Police Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <i>State's Attorney</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Boards and Commissions

<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Control Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Board of Estimates
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire & Police Employees' Retirement System	<input type="checkbox"/> Board of Ethics
<input type="checkbox"/> Labor Commissioner	<input type="checkbox"/> Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals
<input type="checkbox"/> Parking Authority Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Comm. for Historical and Architectural Preservation
<input type="checkbox"/> Planning Commission	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission on Sustainability
<input type="checkbox"/> Wage Commission	<input type="checkbox"/> Employees' Retirement System
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

CITY OF BALTIMORE
ORDINANCE **17-064**
Council Bill 17-0111

Introduced by: The Council President, President Young, Councilmembers Costello, Middleton,
Reisinger, Stokes
At the request of: The Administration (Police Department)
Introduced and read first time: July 17, 2017
Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
Committee Report: Favorable with amendments
Council action: Adopted
Read second time: August 14, 2017

AN ORDINANCE CONCERNING

1 **Weapons – Prohibiting the Illegal Possession of Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

2 FOR the purpose of prohibiting the wearing, carrying, or knowingly transporting of handguns
3 near certain places of public assembly; creating certain exceptions; defining a certain term;
4 establishing ~~a certain mandatory penalty~~ certain penalties, including certain mandatory
5 penalties; setting a special effective date; and generally relating to handguns.

6 BY adding

7 Article 19 - Police Ordinances
8 Section(s) 59-5
9 Baltimore City Code
10 (Edition 2000)

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

13 **Baltimore City Code**

14 **Article 19. Police Ordinances**

15 **Subtitle 59. Weapons**

16 **§ 59-5. HANDGUNS – ILLEGAL POSSESSION PROHIBITED.**

17 (A) ***"HANDGUN" DEFINED.***

18 **IN THIS SECTION "HANDGUN" MEANS A FIREARM, AS DEFINED IN STATE PUBLIC SAFETY**
19 **ARTICLE § 5-101(H), THE BARREL OF WHICH IS 14 INCHES OR UNDER IN LENGTH.**

**EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.
Underlining indicates matter added to the bill by amendment.
Strike-out indicates matter stricken from the bill by
amendment or deleted from existing law by amendment.**

Council Bill 17-0111

1 (B) *CARRYING PROHIBITED.*

2 A PERSON MAY NOT:

3 (1) WEAR, CARRY, OR KNOWINGLY TRANSPORT A HANDGUN, WHETHER CONCEALED OR
4 OPEN, ON OR ABOUT THE PERSON WITHIN 100 YARDS OF, OR IN, A:

5 (I) PARK;

6 (II) CHURCH;

7 (III) SCHOOL;

8 (IV) PUBLIC BUILDING; OR

9 (V) OTHER PLACE OF PUBLIC ASSEMBLY.

10 (2) WEAR, CARRY, OR KNOWINGLY TRANSPORT A HANDGUN, WHETHER CONCEALED OR
11 OPEN, IN A VEHICLE TRAVELING ON A ROAD WITHIN 100 YARDS OF A:

12 (I) PARK;

13 (II) CHURCH;

14 (III) SCHOOL;

15 (IV) PUBLIC BUILDING; OR

16 (V) OTHER PLACE OF PUBLIC ASSEMBLY.

17 (3) WEAR, CARRY, OR KNOWINGLY TRANSPORT A HANDGUN IN CONNECTION WITH THE
18 COMMISSION OF A CRIME AGAINST A PERSON OR PROPERTY, WITHIN 100 YARDS OF,
19 OR IN, A:

20 (I) PARK;

21 (II) CHURCH;

22 (III) SCHOOL;

23 (IV) PUBLIC BUILDING; OR

24 (V) OTHER PLACE OF PUBLIC ASSEMBLY.

25 (C) *PERMISSIBLE INFERENCE.*

26 THE FINDER OF FACT MAY INFER THAT A PERSON WHO TRANSPORTS A HANDGUN IN
27 VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION TRANSPORTS THE HANDGUN KNOWINGLY.

Council Bill 17-0111

1 (D) *EXCEPTIONS.*

2 THIS SECTION DOES NOT PROHIBIT THE WEARING, CARRYING, OR TRANSPORTING OF A
3 HANDGUN BY A PERSON COVERED BY AN EXCEPTION IN STATE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE
4 § 4-203(B).

5 (E) *PENALTIES.*

6 (1) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR AND ON
7 CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING ~~MANDATORY~~ PENALTIES FOR EACH
8 OFFENSE:

9 ~~(I) IMPRISONMENT FOR 1 YEAR; AND~~

10 ~~(II) A FINE OF \$1,000.~~

11 (I) IF THE HANDGUN WAS WORN, CARRIED, OR TRANSPORTED IN CONNECTION
12 WITH THE COMMISSION OF A CRIME AGAINST A PERSON OR PROPERTY,
13 MANDATORY IMPRISONMENT FOR 1 YEAR AND A MANDATORY FINE OF \$1,000;

14 (II) IF THE PERSON HAS A PREVIOUS CONVICTION FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION
15 OR STATE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE § 4-203 {"WEARING, CARRYING, OR
16 TRANSPORTING HANDGUN"}, MANDATORY IMPRISONMENT FOR 1 YEAR AND A
17 MANDATORY FINE OF \$1,000; OR

18 (III) IF NEITHER ITEM (I) NOR ITEM (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH APPLY, A FINE OF NOT
19 MORE THAN \$1,000 OR IMPRISONMENT FOR NOT LONGER THAN 12 MONTHS OR
20 BOTH FINE AND IMPRISONMENT, IN THE DISCRETION OF THE COURT.

21 (2) THE COURT MAY NOT IMPOSE LESS THAN, OR SUSPEND ANY PART OF, ~~THE ANY~~
22 MANDATORY SENTENCE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

23 (3) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR A PROBATION BEFORE
24 JUDGMENT.

25 (4) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE.

26 (5) EACH VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION IS A SEPARATE OFFENSE.

27 (F) *SEVERABILITY.*

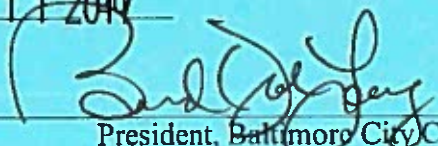
28 ALL PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION ARE SEVERABLE. IF A COURT DETERMINES THAT A
29 WORD, PHRASE, CLAUSE, SENTENCE, PARAGRAPH, SUBSECTION, OR OTHER PROVISION IS
30 INVALID OR THAT THE APPLICATION OF ANY PART OF THE PROVISION TO ANY PERSON OR
31 CIRCUMSTANCES IS INVALID, THE REMAINING PROVISIONS AND THE APPLICATION OF THOSE
32 PROVISIONS TO OTHER PERSONS OR CIRCUMSTANCES ARE NOT AFFECTED BY THAT
33 DECISION.

Council Bill 17-0111

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, That the catchlines contained in this Ordinance
2 are not law and may not be considered to have been enacted as a part of this or any prior
3 Ordinance.

4 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, That this Ordinance takes effect on the date it is
5 enacted.

Certified as duly passed this _____ day of SEP 11 2017



President, Baltimore City Council

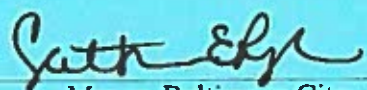
Certified as duly delivered to Her Honor, the Mayor,

this _____ day of SEP 11 2017



Chief Clerk

Approved this 2 day of October, 2017



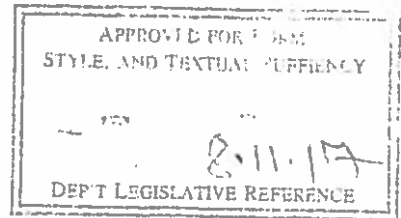
Mayor, Baltimore City

Approved For Form and Legal Sufficiency

This 13th Day of September 2017



Chief Solicitor



AMENDMENTS TO COUNCIL BILL 17-0111
(1st Reader Copy)

By: The Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
{To be offered on the Council Floor}

Amendment No. 1

On page 1, in line 2, after “Prohibiting” insert “the Illegal Possession of”; and, on that same page, in line 17, after “HANDGUNS” insert “– ILLEGAL POSSESSION PROHIBITED”.

Amendment No. 2

On page 1, in line 5, strike “a certain mandatory penalty” and substitute “certain penalties, including certain mandatory penalties”; and, on page 2, after line 14, insert:

“(3) WEAR, CARRY, OR KNOWINGLY TRANSPORT A HANDGUN IN CONNECTION WITH THE COMMISSION OF A CRIME AGAINST A PERSON OR PROPERTY, WITHIN 100 YARDS OF, OR IN, A:

(i) PARK;

(ii) CHURCH;

(iii) SCHOOL;

(iv) PUBLIC BUILDING; OR

(v) OTHER PLACE OF PUBLIC ASSEMBLY.”; and,

ADOPTED

on that same page, in line 24, strike “MANDATORY”; and, on that same page, strike lines 26 and 27 in their entireties and substitute:

“(i) IF THE HANDGUN WAS WORN, CARRIED, OR TRANSPORTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE COMMISSION OF A CRIME AGAINST A PERSON OR PROPERTY, MANDATORY IMPRISONMENT FOR 1 YEAR AND A MANDATORY FINE OF \$1,000;

(ii) IF THE PERSON HAS A PREVIOUS CONVICTION FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION OR STATE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE § 4-203 {“WEARING, CARRYING, OR TRANSPORTING

HANDGUN”}, MANDATORY IMPRISONMENT FOR 1 YEAR AND A MANDATORY FINE OF \$1,000; OR

(III) IF NEITHER ITEM (I) NOR ITEM (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH APPLY, A FINE OF NOT MORE THAN \$1,000 OR IMPRISONMENT FOR NOT LONGER THAN 12 MONTHS OR BOTH FINE AND IMPRISONMENT, IN THE DISCRETION OF THE COURT.”; and,

on that same page, in line 28, before “MANDATORY” strike “THE” and substitute “ANY”.

0111001A

BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL
JUDICIARY AND LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE
VOTING RECORD

BILL#: CC-17-0111 DATE: 7-25-17

BILL TITLE: Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly

MOTION BY: PINKETT SECONDED BY: STOKES

- FAVORABLE FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS
 UNFAVORABLE WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION

NAME	YEAS	NAYS	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Costello, E., Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clarke, M., Vice Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bullock, J.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pinkett, L.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reisinger, E.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scott, B.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stokes, R.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TOTALS	5	2	0	0

CHAIRPERSON: E. V. Costello
 COMMITTEE STAFF: D'Paul S. Nibber, Initials: DN

CITY OF BALTIMORE

CATHERINE E. PUGH, Mayor



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

LARRY E. GREENE, Director
415 City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
410-396-7215 / Fax: 410-545-7596
email: larry.greene@baltimorecity.gov

HEARING NOTES

Bill: 17-0111

Electronic Control Devices - Authorizing Possession in Most Circumstances

Committee: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations

Chaired By: Councilmember Eric Costello

Hearing Date: July 25, 2017

Time (Beginning): 10:05 a.m.

Time (Ending): 4:30 p.m.

Location: Clarence "Du" Burns Chamber

Total Attendance: ~300

Committee Members in Attendance:

Eric Costello Mary Pat Clarke Brandon Scott
Leon Pinkett Edward Reisinger Robert Stokes John Bullock

Bill Synopsis in the file? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Attendance sheet in the file? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Agency reports read? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? [] yes [] no [X] n/a
Evidence of notification to property owners? [] yes [] no [X] n/a
Final vote taken at this hearing? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Motioned by: Councilman Pinkett
Seconded by: Councilman Stokes
Final Vote: Fav w/ Am, 5-2

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Kevin Davis, Commissioner, Police Department
• James Gillis, Director of Government Affairs, Police Department
• Victor Tervalá, Law Department

Major Issues Discussed

1. Chairman Costello introduced the proceedings and discussed how the hearing will be structured.
2. President Young discussed his reasons for supporting 17-0111, which includes losing a close relative to gun violence.
3. Councilman Bullock noted that research shows that there are racialized disparities in policing.
4. Councilman Pinkett stated that the proposed law is not racist, but acknowledged that this law must be one part of a comprehensive plan to attack crime in the City. He added that the conversation surrounding crime must broaden.
5. Councilman Reisinger stated that the Council must act or otherwise risk acknowledging that the current levels of violence are okay.
6. Councilman Scott discussed how mandatory minimums have been empirically shown to not work.
7. Councilman Stokes mentioned that most individuals that would be in violation of this Bill are violent offenders, and that he is supportive of the Bill after having heard from both sides. He added that the Bill is just one more tool to combat violence.
8. Chairman Costello stated that he is sad and angry about the level of violence in the City. He mentioned that he is upset that the law is not being enforced by judges, with 60% of individuals charged with illegal gun possession receiving suspended sentences. Chairman Costello also added that the Council has shown its commitment to youth through the budget.
9. Councilwoman Middleton discussed the Council's work on behalf of youth and added that it should focus on additional programs such as apprenticeships. She noted that the Bill will allow individuals that are found guilty of illegally possessing a gun to get their affairs in order. The Councilwoman added that she received news of an assault involving a gun the morning of the hearing.
10. Councilman Burnett suggested that this Bill does not address the real issues underlying crime in Baltimore including housing and lead paint issues. He added that individuals do not come out of prison as better people, and that there is no pathway to employment in prison. The Councilman noted the employment issues facing those that have criminal convictions in their past.
11. Councilman Cohen stated that this Bill will not work, and that the Council should invest in programs that do work to curb violence including early education and Safe Streets.
12. Councilman Schleiffer noted that mandatory minimums have been shown not to work with drug crimes, but suggested the research is much less clear on guns. He added that he would much rather see someone go through the courtroom process than have the opportunity to take a life. The Councilman stated that nothing is more important than life, noting that MacKenzie Elliot, a victim of gun violence, does not have a future.
13. Councilwoman Sneed stated that the data shows that laws like 17-0111 do not work. She noted that, at age 16, she once got pulled over in a car with someone that illegally had a gun. The Councilwoman stated that if this Bill had been in place when she was pulled over, her life would have been ruined.
14. Delegate Kurt Anderson stated that he appreciates the passion and knowledge of both sides in this debate. He discussed his history as a legislator and dealings with sentencing guidelines. The Delegate noted that he was one of the first to support removing mandatory minimums for drug crimes, but suggested that these crimes are different from gun violence. He mentioned that other jurisdictions have mandatory minimum sentences for gun possession and expressed support for the

Bill. Delegate Anderson added the Council should consider a sunset for the Bill and additional resources for the community to combat gun violence.

15. Senator Joan Carter-Conway expressed support for 17-0111, and suggested that the progress of the Bill should be evaluated over time. She noted that the purpose of the Bill is not to imprison individuals but prevent violence.

16. Mr. David Ralph discussed the Law Department's stance on Council Bill 17-0111, as well as how the Bill works. Councilman Scott asked about the difference between mandatory minimums and specific sentencing, and was told that either distinction would be constitutional. Councilman Burnett asked about the burden of proof required by the Bill, and was told that the State would have to prove their case. Councilman Scott asked about how often the City must defend the Police Department in abuse cases. Councilwoman Clarke asked about what kind of discretion prosecutors would have under this Bill, and was told that they have the ability to determine the merits of the case and whether or not to bring charges.

17. Commissioner Kevin Davis discussed the Police Department's support for Council Bill 17-0111. He expressed opposition for zero tolerance policing and explained how this legislation does not fit within that form of policing. Commissioner Davis cited several statistics in support of the Bill including the fact that 86% of homicides are committed using a gun. He also gave several examples of individuals that were able to commit homicides or be the victim of homicides due to suspended gun sentences. The Commissioner added that illegal gun possession must be viewed as a problem and that holistic policing is a solution.

18. Councilman Bullock proposed amendments that would prevent a mandatory sentence for a first-time illegal gun possession offender, unless in the commission of a crime. The amendments passed 7-0.

19. Councilman Schleiffer proposed amendments that would change the language of the Bill to clarify that "illegal" possession of guns is what is being subjected to the new sentencing guidelines. The amendments passed 7-0.

20. Councilwoman Clarke proposed an amendment that would sunset the Bill in two years. The amendment failed 3-4.

21. Councilman Scott proposed amendments that would make 17-0111 apply only to violent crimes. The amendment failed 3-4.

22. Councilman Cohen shared a story in which he was robbed at gunpoint in his home. He stated that he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result. The Councilman added that he wanted a gun afterward, and noted that many in the City are in similar positions. He expressed concern that this Bill will end up hurting previous victims of gun violence. Councilman Cohen stated that 17-0111 will also ensure that more kids are without their parents because they are jailed, which will, in turn, stretch the City's resources even further.

23. Delegate Cheryl Glenn expressed her support for Council Bill 17-0111. She noted that the City's population has decreased as perceptions of the City as being violent have increased. The Delegate asked who would want to move into a city plagued with crime. She stated that the City has lost political strength as its population has dwindled. Delegate Glenn also said that many offenders are being released without consequence.

24. Councilman Pinkett asked Commissioner Davis how the Police Department has responded to its perceived trust issues, and the Commissioner responded that he has fired 23 officers and sought numerous measures to increase accountability throughout the agency.

25. Councilman Scott stated that he would like a full list of the sentences for gun offenders.

26. Councilman Burnett stated that judges cannot solely be blamed for the number of suspended sentences in illegal gun possession cases because many cases are poorly prepared by the State's Attorney's Office and the Police Department. He asked why this mandatory minimum would make a difference when similar measures have not in the past. The Councilman was told that this could potentially be a life-saving measure because guns are involved.
27. Councilman Dorsey stated that this measure could have the opposite intended effect on violent crime over the long-term due to individuals going through the carceral program.
28. Councilman Burnett asked how the Police Department will determine the distance from public spaces as mentioned in the Bill. He was told that the Department has developed a map. The Councilman also suggested that it is presumptive that crime will drop because certain individuals are incarcerated since most criminal organizations will seek to replace them.
29. Councilman Scott asked whether there would be additional measures proposed to combat crime as was suggested. He noted that this measure could create a chilling effect on receiving confessions by the Police Department. The Councilman also noted that the Bill, by virtue of its geographic scope, will affect certain minority neighborhoods more than others. He was told that the Bill was constructed based on the guidelines established by the General Assembly.
30. Dr. Joe Sakran is a gunshot victim and experienced trauma as a result. He stated that he became a trauma surgeon because of his experiences with gun violence. Dr. Sakran believes that measures must be taken to prevent gun homicides.
31. Dr. David Wilson is the President of Morgan State University and noted that his campus has spent millions in safety initiatives. He supports Council Bill 17-0111 because he believes it will keep his campus safe.
32. Mr. Joshua Prince stated that he and his organization, the Civil Rights Defense Firm, are opposed to the Bill on Constitutional grounds. He cited issues of due process, religious freedom, and equal protection. Mr. Prince added that the language of the Bill is vague and puts the onus of proving innocence on the defendant. He suggested that the Council should invest in youth activities.
33. Mr. Duane Davis was opposed to the Bill and described it as a repeat of stop and frisk. He stated that he believes this Bill targets Black men.
34. Mr. Jason Rodriguez is the President of the Irvington Business Association and opposes 17-0111. He stated that there are numerous problems with incarceration including re-entry issues. Mr. Rodriguez does not believe policing works, and encourage the Council to look at grassroots solutions that engage children.
35. Ms. Loretta Blackledge stated that she supports the Bill and that illegal guns must be removed from the City.
36. Mr. Kevin Fenwick stated that his son was killed by a gun in his own backyard. He mentioned that he supports the Bill because he does not want anyone to feel as he did after his son's passing.
37. Mr. Andre Auston stated that he supports the Bill because he believes there are loopholes in the current law and its enforcement. He added that he believes that many of the issues involving violence are due to a lack of family structure, and there needs to be more mentorship opportunities.
38. Mr. Zach Zwagil stated that he opposed 17-0111 because many with illegal guns are worried about their own personal safety. He suggested that the City focus on the economic prospects of its citizenry as a means to reduce crime.
39. Ms. Daphne Austen mentioned that he son was shot and killed. She added that if the Bill is enacted, members of the police must be well trained. Ms. Austen stated that young men in possession of illegal fire arms cannot simply be thrown away.

40. Mr. Anirban Basu highlighted the economic impact of violent crime. He stated that Baltimore has fallen behind other cities in population, which may have cost the City \$2 billion in tax revenue over the next ten years.
41. Mr. Christopher Ervin stated that he works with Lazarus Rite, a re-entry program. He suggested that the City fund programs like his because they will do a better job of preventing crime. Mr. Ervin expressed concern that young persons' futures are at risk because of this Bill.
42. Mr. Bill Goodin stated that the Police Department should destroy any guns it confiscates in accordance with a 1996 resolution.
43. Mr. Derrick Dewitt is a funeral director and stated that he supports the Bill because he is tired of overseeing so many funerals of young people. He mentioned that he was a part of Cease Fire and used to sit down with 30 violent offenders at a time to prevent future violence. Mr. Dewitt requested that more money go to faith-based programs to help at-risk individuals.
44. Ms. Mary Braden stated that she works with SURJ, an organization that advocates on behalf of Persons of Color. She mentioned that she is opposed to the Bill because of its impact on racial equity and the possibility of mass incarceration.
45. Ms. Harriett Smith stated that she is opposed to 17-0111 because mandatory minimum sentences do not reduce violence and are not a deterrent. She explained that the data supporting New York's mandatory minimum sentencing for illegal gun possession is erroneous because it coincides with an overall trend in crime reduction.
46. Ms. Genevieve Wilson discussed her opposition to the Bill as a teacher for 21 years in juvenile detention centers. She suggested that arrests are not an alternative to stopping crime. Ms. Wilson mentioned that, as a teacher, she often came across children that were not bathed, hungry, and in need of certain hygiene products. She added that their families are stretched thin. Ms. Wilson suggested finding means to de-escalate potentially violent situations.
47. Mr. Christopher Crawley stated that he does not support 17-0111 and questioned whether the appropriate authorities were consulted in developing the law. He also mentioned that potential offenders are without the resources they need to prevent a life of crime.
48. Ms. Denise Reid expressed support for the Bill and mentioned that she lost a child to gun violence after a prolonged hospitalization.
49. Mr. Mark McLaurin discussed his opposition to the Bill, noting the perspectives of members of the service industry that work with young people.
50. Mr. Brandon Dickens stated that he supports the Bill and is a pastor at a local church. He stated that his church was sprayed by bullets at random, and that a member was gunned down recently.
51. Mr. Eric March is a funeral director and stated that he supports 17-0111 with reservations. He suggested that the culture of Baltimore needs to change.
52. Mr. Marcus Strider stated that he would like to send a letter in support of the proposed ordinance.
53. Mr. JC Faulk stated that he opposed the Bill. He suggested that we expect too much of teenagers in situations involving guns, wherein one could make a rash decision much like adults.
54. Ms. Gretchen Tome discussed her opposition to the Bill, stating that mandatory minimum sentences devastate the Black community.
55. Ms. Tawanda Jones expressed dissatisfaction with the Bill and stated that there is already a law that provides mandatory minimum sentences for repeat violent offenders. She also expressed dissatisfaction with the Police Department.

56. Mr. Vince Robinson expressed concern regarding 17-0111, noting that Department of Justice report that describes the inequitable treatment of Black youths.
57. Mr. Ellsworth Johnson-Bey stated that he opposes the Bill because African Americans will be disproportionately affected.
58. Mr. Todd Oppenheim discussed his opposition to the Bill as a 13 year public defender. He suggested that most cases involving gun charges are poorly constructed, which is why many receive suspended sentences. Mr. Oppenheim also noted that mandatory minimum sentences will strip discretion from judges and give it to young inexperienced prosecutors. He added that mandatory sentences do not deter crime.
59. Mr. Norman Eaton is supportive of 17-0111 as a pastor in the City. He gave numerous statistics regarding gun violence, and noted that most homicides with guns involve an individual charged with a gun crime in the past. Mr. Eaton added that the City must also deal with the education, health, and other facets of life for Baltimore residents.
60. Ms. Jo Brown is opposed to the Bill as a founder of Peaceable City. She noted many disparities affecting Black communities in the criminal justice system. Ms. Brown suggested that the City should not strip authority from an educated judiciary.
61. Mr. Kinji Scott is opposed to 17-0111 and noted his advocacy against violence in the streets. He spoke about his younger cousin having been killed in St. Louis recently. Mr. Scott advocated for a comprehensive, citywide public safety program.
62. Mr. J. Wyndal Gordon is opposed the Bill and noted many issues such as stripping judges of their discretion, the cost of incarceration, and trust issues with the Police Department.
63. Ms. Vanessa Sims testified in opposition to Council Bill 17-0111. She detailed a gun related shooting in which she was harmed as well as her child in the womb. Ms. Sims suggested that the City must work together to solve gun violence and noted that mandatory minimum sentences do not work.
64. Mr. Luck Crosby is opposed to this legislation and stated that his two sons were lost to gun violence.
65. Mr. Rod Easter supports 17-0111, but would also like rehabilitation for those that are incarcerated. He stated that he is a recovering addict and provides guidance and mentorship to his family. Mr. Easter added that he is a handgun qualified licensee. He noted that families must have justice for lost loved ones, even if it harms perpetrators.
66. Mr. Kenneth Gwee is opposed to the Bill. He stated that mandatory minimums are not a deterrent. Mr. Gwee stated that economic factors are the ultimate factor in whether an individual will commit a crime.
67. Mr. Elder CD Witherspoon is opposed to the Bill and stated that this is an issue of increased policing, but not public safety. He suggested that the Council should focus on quality of life issues as opposed to punitive issues.
68. Ms. Gwen DuBois is opposed to 17-0111. She asked whether this legislation is rooted in evidence.
69. Mr. Thomas Coyne expressed opposition to the Bill. He asked that the Council focus on a plan in Philadelphia, wherein the City is rebuilding its communities through seized money in criminal cases.
70. Mr. Ricky Mannen is opposed to 17-0111. He suggested that this Bill violates §7-501 in the Maryland Code with regards to diminution credits.

71. Mr. Calvin Smith discussed his opposition to the Bill. He stated that there are many issues contributing to crime including the laying off of teachers, closing of recreation centers, and wages that are too low to make a living.
72. Mr. Nikai Campbell is opposed to the Bill and stated that the reason individuals are killing one another is because of a lack of opportunity.
73. Ms. Keesha Ha is opposed to the Bill and expressed a lack of confidence in the Police Department.
74. Mr. Melvin Barker discussed his opposition to 17-0111. He stated that there are numerous reasons to vote against the Bill including mass incarceration issues, the need for jobs, and lives will be ruined.
75. Ms. Caryn York is opposed to the Bill and works with JOTF to reduce employment barriers. She noted several different statistics including the fact that 87% of those facing mandatory minimums are African American. Ms. York also stated that many individuals with illegal guns are seeking protection or are unaware of a gun being present. She suggested that jobs would solve the gun violence issues.
76. Ms. Lydia Walther-Rodriguez is opposed to this legislation and stated that it will disproportionately affect Black and Brown youth. She also noted that there will be increased penalties for immigrant community members.
77. Ms. Lena Leone is supportive of 17-0111. She described a potential shooting with assault weapons in a Greenmount West playground that occurred on March 31, 2016. Ms. Leone noted that death is final and would like guns to be illegal. She would like to be able to raise her children in the City.
78. Ms. Sheena Smith is opposed to the Bill. She stated that her nephew was murdered in 2015, but does not believe this legislation will bring about positive change.
79. Ms. Inez Robb supports this legislation. She stated that her children are afraid to go out in their Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood. Ms. Robb also reiterated that 86% of murders in the City are committed by handguns.
80. Mr. Pujon Baral is opposed to 17-0111 and stated that mandatory minimums do not work and this will serve to increase mass incarceration. He cited the New York statistics regarding mandatory minimums for illegal gun possession and how they do not necessarily coincide with a decrease in crime.
81. Ms. Nicole Hanson discussed her opposition to this Bill and stated that mandatory minimums do not work. She mentioned that she would like for the Council to be bold in providing economic opportunities to residents and show resistance to powerful entities in the City.
82. Mr. Dayron Love stated that he opposes 17-0111. He described the current violence as former Mayor O'Malley's policies coming home to roost. Mr. Love expressed regret that gun violence intervention programs have ended.
83. Mr. Don Hickman stated that he supports this legislation. He mentioned that the City's violence is because of degradation in culture. Mr. Hickman suggested that the City provide more supports for youth in addition to this Bill.
84. Mr. James Jones supports this legislation and the Police Department. He noted that he has been on many ride-alongs and seen how police officers work hard in large jurisdictions.
85. Mr. Leo Burroughs stated that he is opposed to this legislation because it is rife with injustice. He suggested that the Council support a \$15 minimum wage and vocational school funding instead. Mr. Burroughs suggested that police officers do not work hard in his community. He also decried the economic disparities throughout the City.

86. Ms. Sandra Mack-Diggs supports this legislation and stated that she recently lost her grand-nephew to gun violence.

87. Ms. Amanda Norris expressed opposition to the Bill. She cited many different reasons for opposing this legislation including the recent Department of Justice report regarding poor policing, a lack of educational opportunities, and the prison industrial complex.

88. Mr. Kevin Parson supports this legislation as a criminologist and sociologist. He stated that there are no easy solutions but the City must act to stop recidivism, especially among violent offenders.

89. Ms. Uriel Castrillon supports 17-0111 as a pastor that works with the Police Department. He stated that he has seen the consequences of gun violence firsthand. Mr. Castrillon stated that he believes that criminals will continue to commit crimes if they feel that there are no consequences to their actions. He praised the Police Department and its officers.

90. Councilman Pinkett proposed an amendment that would clarify that the Bill applies to first-time offenders who commit crimes against person or property using a gun. The amendment passed 7-0.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes No

If yes, describe. N/A

Committee Vote:

E. Costello: Yea
M. Clarke: Nay
J. Bullock: Yea
L. Pinkett: Yea
E. Reisinger: Yea
B. Scott: Nay
R. Stokes: Yea

D'Paul Nibber

D'Paul Nibber, Committee Staff

Date: August 11, 2017

cc: Bill File
OCS Chrono File

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

received
7-28-17

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111:

Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017.

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good "law and order" policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This "one-size-fits-all" approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111:

Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that "the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background."¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, "it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement."² Pager concluded, that "the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men."

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111:

Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111:

Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111:

Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111:

Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111:
Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111:

Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017.

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111:

Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111:

Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pagcr_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pagcr_ajs.pdf

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good "law and order" policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This "one-size-fits-all" approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that "the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background."¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, "it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement."² Pager concluded, that "the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men."

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, state's attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that "the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background."¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, "it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement."² Pager concluded, that "the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men."

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pagcr_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good "law and order" policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This "one-size-fits-all" approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good "law and order" policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This "one-size-fits-all" approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pagcr_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pagcr_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good "law and order" policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This "one-size-fits-all" approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, state's attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that "the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background."¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, "it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement."² Pager concluded, that "the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men."

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good “law and order” policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This “one-size-fits-all” approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, state's attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pagcr_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pagcr_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good "law and order" policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This "one-size-fits-all" approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, state's attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good "law and order" policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This "one-size-fits-all" approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, state's attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that "the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background."¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, "it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement."² Pager concluded, that "the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men."

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

JOTF **JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

ADVOCATING BETTER SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOMES

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO CB 17-0111: **Weapons - Prohibiting Handguns Near Places of Public Assembly**

TO: Hon. Eric Costello, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Caryn York, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
DATE: July 25, 2017

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland, particularly those workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. JOTF urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report for CB 17-0111.

The Challenge

It is well established that African American communities, in particular, across the country are disproportionately affected by a criminal justice system that wastes resources, destroys lives and harms public safety. This is particularly true in Maryland where over seventy percent (73%) of prison inmates are black when they only comprise approximately 30% of the total population in Maryland. Blacks receive longer sentences than other groups for the same offenses and comprise approximately 87% of those incarcerated on mandatory minimums. As such, JOTF opposes CB 17-0111 for the following reasons:

- 1) Mandatory minimums are a vestige of the failed war on drugs and perpetuate failed, feel-good "law and order" policies instead of focusing political capital on proven crime prevention strategies such as investment in anti-violence programs, drug treatment, reentry and workforce development initiatives.
- 2) This "one-size-fits-all" approach leads to severe unintended consequences (e.g. targeting those trying to protect themselves as opposed to violent criminals, constructive possession traps innocent people who had nothing to do with the weapon, etc.).
- 3) Cases are and will be pled out to lower sentences not because of weak prosecutors/judges but because of bad policing. This is also contradictory to the recent commitments that the City of Baltimore has made to implementing the consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department. If we are seriously interested in escaping the pitfalls of previous administrations (e.g. the patterns and practices outlined in the 2016 US Department of Justice report) then we must embrace a new strategy of investment instead of incarceration.

The Impacts

The Council must consider the impacts of the proposed legislation. How does this work on the ground? Who implements this and how will it be done? Impact on Police, states attorney, defenders, judges? How does it impact our city and state's jail and prison population? What are the benefits and costs to the community and families where people charged with an illegal gun are removed for a year? And, what will be done when those who have completed their mandatory minimum sentences return to their communities of residence?

Approximately 15,000 prisoners are released from Maryland institutions each year. Many have little or no mainstream work experience, and most read at or below a third grade reading level when they entered prison. Without access to job opportunities, these Marylanders run a high risk of slipping through the cracks and returning to prison.

With the rapidly expanding use of background checks, job seekers determined to be productive citizens are routinely excluded from consideration for jobs even for minor offenses that sometimes occurred decades ago. The impact of having a criminal record is exacerbated among African Americans, who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market and are more likely than their white counterparts to have a criminal record. This is even true in Maryland, where more than 72% of the prison population and 81% of those serving mandatory minimums for drugs offenses is black. This means that, as a result, black men and women that have interacted with the criminal justice system will face significant barriers to securing employment, housing, and other critical resources.

There is a mountain of research that examines the correlation of criminal records, race and employment opportunities. One such study by Devah Pager, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, examined: 1) the extent to which employers use criminal records in hiring decisions; 2) if race itself remains a barrier to employment; and, 3) the different effects a criminal record has for white and African-American applicants. The study followed African-American and white 23-year-old male college students with identical credentials who applied for entry-level positions requiring no more than a high school diploma. Each participant was given a criminal record with a non-violent, felony drug conviction. Pager found that “the effect of race was very large, equal to or greater than the effect of a criminal record. Only 14% of black men without criminal records were called back, a proportion equal to or less than even the number of whites with a criminal background.”¹

While race and criminal records each have strong independent effects on employment, the interaction of the two may decrease the likelihood for African Americans to access employment. African Americans with criminal records are one-third as likely as African Americans without a criminal record to be called back for a job. As Pager states, “it seems that employers, already reluctant to hire blacks, are even more wary of those with proven criminal involvement.”² Pager concluded, that “the evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.”

This is not new. The startling disparities and overwhelming evidence demonstrate that our current system is a failure and sorely in need of bold, comprehensive reform rather than a perpetuation of failed policies. Investment in economic opportunities *for all* are key to reducing crime. Not more incarceration.

For these reasons, JOTF urges the committee to reject CB 17-0111 and identify opportunities to invest in the employability of job seekers with a criminal background.

¹ Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pagcr_ajs.pdf

² Pager, Devah. (2003), *The Mark of a Criminal Record*. The American Journal of Sociology, 108(5), 937-75. Retrieved from: http://www.princeton.edu/~pager/pager_ajs.pdf

Joseph V. Sakran, MD, MPH, MPA, FACS
Assistant Professor of Surgery
Associate Chief, Division of Acute Care Surgery
Director, Emergency General Surgery
Email: jsakran1@jhmi.edu
(c) 571-432-6352

received
7-25-17

Judiciary and Legislative Affairs Committee

July 25, 2017 – Testimony

Good morning Chairman Costello and committee members, my name is Joseph Sakran and I'm one of the trauma surgeons at the Johns Hopkins Hospital here in Baltimore. Before I start let me just say that my comments today represent solely my view and not that of the university or hospital.

Just over 20 years ago, I had been a healthy 17-year year old student at a high school football game. One moment I was simply an innocent bystander, and the next I became collateral damage as a violent fight broke out after the game and a 38-caliber bullet ripped through my throat, lodging in my shoulder. Nearly unconscious at the time, I still can vividly see the expressions on the faces of the many people trying to help me that day. The chaos around me in the trauma bay filled me both with fear and awe – fear that I might die and awe at the fearless purpose of the medical personnel fighting to save my life. A prolonged hospital stay, and many operations, gave me a second chance. As a trauma surgeon today, I am grateful for the opportunity to give others the same second chance that I received. But the reality is that not everyone is as fortunate.

Communities all across this great nation have been plagued with this public health crisis known as gun violence. As I spent this past weekend at the September 11th Memorial, reflecting on the human tragedy that took the lives of 2,977 Americans, nearly 16 years ago.... I thought for a second, imagine if every year such human tragedy took place and it happened not once but 10

times. That's right [10] 9/11's equate to the over 30,000 firearm deaths we see annually.....so what is our responsibility as citizens, police officers, healthcare practioners, and elected officials to address what I consider a completely preventable human tragedy. I won't repeat the numbers that have been previously sighted but will tell you that Baltimore City does not stand alone when it comes to opportunities to make our community safer.

Every time I have to go out to that waiting room, and speak with a family of a son or daughter that's been a victim of gun violence, I think of my own family and what must have been going through their minds at that time. And by far the worst moment for me is when I see those faces of mothers, and fathers anxiously waiting for an update on their loved one.....because I know that the news I'm about to share with them will turn their world upside down. And often I leave numb, with the image of their faces chiseled into my memory.

So I stand before you today as a former victim of gun violence, a trauma surgeon, and perhaps most importantly a member of your community with the message that enough is enough. This is not a Democratic issue, it's not a Republican issues, it's an American Issue. Reducing gun violence in our community will require strong leadership like we have seen under the tutelage of Mayor Pugh and Commissioner Davis, it necessitates a multi-disciplinary approach, the integration of public-private partnerships, passing of common sense public policy, and most importantly the focus on ensuring we have a commitment to our young people, the next generation who are looking to each one of us for that glimmer of hope and perhaps that second chance. Thank you.

received
7-25-17

How Much More Do We Have To Prove?

Ladies and gentlemen of this city and state, This evening 1-5-16 we the people, the citizens of Baltimore Maryland will clearly lay out the facts and prove beyond the reasonable doubt that our local political officials are not only in cohorts with the corruption of the police department but they are indeed conspirators to drug trafficking as well as murder.

Citizens of the juror I ask that you listen intently as we the people lay out the facts that will validate reasoning as to why each of these defendants are guilty of not just perjury but they each have on many occasions given approval for the misuse and abuse of weapons and drugs that the police department confiscates from the streets.

Why is it that these defendants could be okay with signing on to when a gang member such as the BGF, Bloods or other gangs have been suggested of killing either distribution? Why is it okay at this point to condemn and point fingers at an entire organization and yet, when it comes to the murders as well as the drug activities that is directly from the police department we the citizens hear nothing but silence.

Yes as I will cite just a few of many cases of police corruption not just here in Baltimore but throughout the country. As I will ask each of you to use the technology that is at your homes as well as in your hands to goggle what I am presenting so that there is not doubt that what is presented is nothing other than the truth.

As I prepare to present my facts there is one question that I want to put before each of you. If what I am presenting was evidence that was to be used against either of us in the court of law....what would be the outcome? That is my question citizens and as I present you with the evidence that each of these defendants are guilty of not acting on, I ask that they too just like any other citizen will be found guilty of all charges related.

June 26, 2014 a Baltimore County Cadet stole over a hundred thousand dollars in cash as well as stole drugs from the evidence room. In the year of 2013 Baltimore Police Officer pleads guilty to drug trafficking and distribution. June 2014 drugs go missing from Baltimore Police evidence room. These are just a few of the cases here in Baltimore.....there are many more present as well as there are many not accounted for.

June 2004 there is a three million dollar theft from the Memphis police evidence room of weapons and drugs. It has been stated that it was two million worth of cocaine.....560 pounds of weed and thousands of dollars in cash.

Kentucky September 2015 In Bullitt County the Sheriff's Special Deputy was charged with conspiracy to distribute a ton of weed.

Chicago Tribune Newspaper wrote on October 20, 2011 that Heroin was stolen from the Will County Police Evidence Room.

In 2014 Washington Post writes about how FBI tells how addicted agent stole drugs from evidence room for 10 months.

Yes and as I just cite a couple other cases, I ask that each of you will find pleasure at searching utube for police caught stealing from evidence rooms.

Eugene Oregon State Police March 2013 over a thousand pieces of evidence have been stolen from the evidence room....guns,drugs and jewelry.

The Chronicle Newspaper reproted 2-11-15 that drugs and guns was stolen from the Newport Virginia evidence room.

Deleware County Upper Derby 2-11-15 drugs and guns stolen from evidence room.

Lastly I will leave each of you with this and as i stated, the examples of evidence that i presented is just a few of thousands. However, as of 2009 there have been 9 states to pass law that gives the police the right to sale weapons back on the streets. Please look up house bill 1421 during the 2013 legislative session in Texas where you will see for your self that the bill has given police the right to resale these weapons.

So as I bring my argument to a close, I ask each of you not only the jurors but I even ask the defendants.....what reason is there to not have a citizens group present to witness te incineration of weapons and drugs that is confiscated by the police.....there could only be one logically reason if there is any and that is that the conspiracy is to deep. I ask that you the citizens find these defendants guilty of protecting and serving the interest of citizens. Thank You

Pulse of the City

by Bill Goodin 07/11-17, 1997

On July 14, from 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m., a protest will take place in front of Police headquarters regarding a resolution that was passed by the Baltimore City Council last October.

I want to thank the Council members for supporting this resolution which will better the city.

Without question, if this resolution is implemented, citizens would witness true progress in the reduction of crime and creation of partnerships with law enforcement.

Now, I'd like to explain this resolution. It calls for the police commissioner to devise a plan so that citizens can witness the incineration of weapons and drugs confiscated from the streets.

Little has yet been done on this

issue, in spite of the fact that many elected officials, including the mayor, some delegates and senators, agree with it.

It has been said that the wheel that squeaks the loudest gets greased. If that is the case, we must come out in large numbers in support of this cause.

Let's look at some of the benefits that would come from such a law and see the positive things that would come about.

First, what we see destroyed cannot resurface back into our neighborhoods; not by mistake or on purpose.

Second, this process would enable citizens, who doubt the honesty of the police department, to trust the department which, in turn, could depend on citizens to get



Bill Goodin

involved.

Third. Another positive result would be to cast out the doubt that some of us have regarding corruption in a department which allows drugs and weapons to resurface in our communities again.

There are many other positive results that would happen. And, if there is nothing to hide, why shouldn't citizens witness this incineration?

If the police department came under investigation tomorrow morning, the rate of corruption would be enormous.

As a citizen and a parent, I have the right to fight for a brighter future. I have the right to speak out against what I think is wrong and I have the right to make suggestions for solutions.

Here are some other suggestions.

I encourage every reader to research corruption in police departments across the country. I promise that you will understand the urgency of protesting with us on July 14.

Remember. If we want change, we must stand and fight. When one stands and fights, there are no losers.

CITY OF BALTIMORE

KURT L. SCHMOKE, Mayor



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

250 City Hall
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

May 6, 1997


Mr. William Gooden
611 Springfield Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21212

Dear Mr. ^{Bill} Gooden:

I look forward to meeting with you at City Hall on May 14, 1997 at 4:15 PM.

Please call my Scheduling Officer, Barbara McCoy, at 396-4889 if there are any questions.

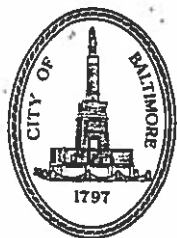
Sincerely,


Mayor

KLS:myt

• • • • •
B * L T I M O R E

AMERICAN CITY OF BALTIMORE



BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL

AGNES WELCH

VICE PRESIDENT

CHAIRPERSON:
URBAN AND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE:
HEALTH
AGING
LABOR

MEMBER:
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

LAND USE

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

HUMAN SERVICES
COMMISSION

POLICY AND PLANNING

January 30, 1997

Mr. Bill Gooden
611 Springfield Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21212

Dear Mr. Gooden:

As per our conversation, I announced the status of City Council Resolution 282 during the Council meeting of January 27, 1997. I hope you saw it on cable. The President, Lawrence Bell and the Council Members all agree that a follow-up on this resolution should be executed.

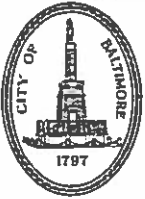
Sincerely,

Agnes Welch

AW/ab



BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL



June 23, 1997

Mr. William Goodin
611 Springfield Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21212

Dear Mr. Goodin:

A copy of the letter sent to President Lawrence A. Bell, III is being forwarded to you per the instructions of Councilman Melvin L. Stukes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marcia A. Bullock".

Marcia A. Bullock
Executive Assistant

MELVIN L. STUKES — Sixth District

ROOM 550, CITY HALL
100 N. HOLLIDAY STREET, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21202
TELEPHONE: (410) 396-4833
FAX: (410) 396-8465

VICE CHAIRMAN:
POLICY AND PLANNING
COMMITTEE

MEMBER:
EDUCATION AND HUMAN
RESOURCES COMMITTEE

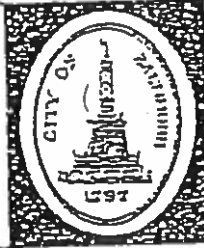
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

TAXATION AND FINANCE
COMMITTEE

"Working Together Works For All People!"

CITY OF BALTIMORE

KURT L. SCHMOKE, Mayor



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

250 City Hall
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

September 10, 1997

The Honorable Lawrence A. Bell, III
President
Baltimore City Council
400 City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: City Council Bill 282

Lawrence A. Bell, III
Dear President Bell:

I am writing to propose a procedure that would comply with the intent of the resolution passed by the City Council concerning the incineration of drugs and guns confiscated by the Baltimore City Police Department.

As you know, Police Commissioner Frazier and I have been working on this matter for several months. You will recall that the Commissioner wrote to you about some of the problems he encountered in complying with the resolution because of confidentiality issues raised by the private companies who have in the past incinerated this material as a service to the city (See letter attached). In an attempt to strike an appropriate balance between the concerns of the companies and the concerns of the citizens who urged adoption of the resolution, I propose the following procedure:

- 1) The police department will destroy confiscated weapons and drugs at least four times a year;
- 2) A small group comprised of one representative of the BCPD; an official of the Department of Public Works; a member of the City Council; and a citizen appointed by the President of the City Council will witness the incineration;
- 3) The City Council will be notified two weeks before the date of incineration to give adequate time for selecting participants to the witness group;
- 4) The members of the witness group will not be told which facility will be the site of the incineration until the day of the weapons and drug destruction;

The Honorable Lawrence A. Bell, III
September 10, 1997
Page 2

- 5) The witness group will make a report to the City Council without identifying the location of the incineration facility.

It would be our intention to rotate the use of various incineration facilities approved for the activity located in the mid-Atlantic area. The Mayor's Office will absorb the transportation cost for the citizen member of the witness group. We assume that the citizen witness will be a resident of Baltimore City.

If this procedure is satisfactory to you and members of the City Council, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Mayor

KLS:cc

Enclosure

cc: Vera Hall

CC 279

Holton

ORDINANCE - Minority and Women's Business Enterprises - FOR the purpose of amending the definition of Hispanic Americans to include persons of Portuguese and Dominican Republic origin; and providing for a special effective date. (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT)

CC 280

Handy, Holton, Conway, Welch
(Empower Baltimore Management Corp.) - RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL - East Harbor Village Center, Inc. - FOR the purpose of approving East Harbor Village Center, Inc. as a recipient of benefits from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Neighborhood Partnership Program for a public safety and community policing project; and providing for a special effective date. (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/HOUSING)

CC 281

Rawlings, Holton, Spector, Garey, Welch
COUNCIL RESOLUTION - Assisted Living - Elderly Persons - FOR the purpose of investigating the availability of assisted living programs for the elderly and disabled residents of Baltimore City.

CC 282

Holton, Spector

COUNCIL RESOLUTION - Confiscated Drugs and Weapons - Incineration - FOR the purpose of directing the Police Commissioner to prepare a plan to provide for public witnesses to the incineration of confiscated drugs and guns.

48297
Zale - the Mayor
CALL the Bill 282
so report.

I am responsible for

this resolution

Bill GOODIN

10/21/96

VENA HALL

CC 279

Holton

ORDINANCE - Minority and Women's Business Enterprises - FOR the purpose of amending the definition of Hispanic Americans to include persons of Portuguese and Dominican Republic origin; and providing for a special effective date. (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT)

CC 280

Handy, Holton, Conway, Welch
(Empower Baltimore Management Corp.) - RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL - East Harbor Village Center, Inc. - FOR the purpose of approving East Harbor Village Center, Inc. as a recipient of benefits from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Neighborhood Partnership Program for a public safety and community policing project; and providing for a special effective date. (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/HOUSING)

CC 281

Rawlings, Holton, Spector, Garey, Welch
COUNCIL RESOLUTION - Assisted Living - Elderly Persons - FOR the purpose of investigating the availability of assisted living programs for the elderly and disabled residents of Baltimore City.

CC 282

Holton, Spector

COUNCIL RESOLUTION - Confiscated Drugs and Weapons - Incineration - FOR the purpose of directing the Police Commissioner to prepare a plan to provide for public witnesses to the incineration of confiscated drugs and guns.

I am responsible for

this resolution

Bill GEDIN

10/21/96

WETA Hall

48297
396 - the mayor
CALL Bill 282
support.

July 25, 2017

To: Councilpresident@baltimorecity.gov

From: Inez Robb

President

Fulton community Association

Sandtown Winchester Condominium Association

Western District Community Relations Council

received
7-23-17

Subjet: Council Bill 17-0111

My name is Inez Robb and I been living in the Sandtown Winchester neighborhood for 30 years as a home owner. I support Council Bill 17-0111 for the following reasons:

As I talk and listen to residents, community leaders, youth, seniors, and businesses we all agree that to many people are being murdered in Baltimore city. The children are afraid to go to the corner store, go to the playground, or play in front of where they live. Some resident are afraid to set on their steps or porches, go to the super market and even go to Bible study. Just put yourself in their place.

So far this year we have had 189 murders, 86% were from handguns or 162 people. 46% of the victims had previously been arrested for a gun crime and 41.5% of the suspects had previously been arrested for a gun crime.

This year there has been 361 NON-fatal shooting in Baltimore city, the handguns used in these crimes are ILLEGALLY possessed by the offenders, which is generating the most violent crimes in Baltimore City. From 2016 to present 605 people have been found guilty in criminal cases involving a gun. 60% of those found guilty received the majority of their sentence suspended by the judges. WHY, WHY, WHY. The offenders do not view the possession of an ILLEGAL gun is a serious crime with serious consequences.

If passed, Bill 17-0111, being arrested, prosecuted and CONVICTED of possessing an ILLEGALLY handgun would lead to a 1 year jail sentence and can not be suspended by judges.

Lets help neighborhoods and communities feel safer and feel that our elected officials care. That's why I am asking you to vote in support of Bill 17-0111.

Thank you
Inez Robb



received
7-27-17

Hello Mr. Bullock,

My name is Nikai Campbell and I am a student organizer with Communities United. We met and spoke during a tour my organization and I were having at city hall. I am contacting you regarding Mayor Catherine Pugh's one-year mandatory minimum bill for handguns. I hear you are supporting this bill. You represent the 9th district which I live in and I don't know if you are aware but the crime rate in my community is outrageous and it seems like no one ever really gets into the details and asks why. Why are these people committing these crimes? Well I think I have the answer. Formally incarcerated people get out of jail trying to start fresh with a clean slate. They go out looking for jobs but can't get hired because they have a record and not many jobs will hire a person with a record. Then, that person is left with no choice but to either go to a low income –minimum wage—job and when that's not enough to support them and their families they start doing things that will. Things like selling drugs or committing other bad crimes. Maybe if there were job opportunities that would hire some of these formally incarcerated people and actually pay them well the crime rate would be decreased. This bill will not solve any problems it will only make them worst which will affect my community and many more. Please, please, Councilman Bullock, change your mind on the decision you made. Myself and many more people are depending on you!

Sincerely,

Nikai Campbell

