

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am a longtime resident of Maryland, and a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Annapolis and Anne Arundel County. I am a resident of District 31, and I am testifying in support of Senate Bill [SB0087](#).

I am urging you to support this bill for all of the same reasons listed by the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) in their issue brief: [Prison Oversight: Establishing a Maryland Correctional Ombudsman](#).

According to MAJR:

“The Ombudsman office will investigate complaints from women and men behind bars, staff, volunteers and family members. This office will conduct independent reviews and inspect the prison premises via unannounced visits. Findings will be reported within 30 days after investigations are complete and the complainants will be notified about actions taken, which could include resolution through mediation. An Ombudsman advisory board, drawn from returning citizens, nonsupervisory staff, family members, social workers and others, also will assist to identify priorities for investigations.

With the Correctional Ombudsman bill, we can create an environment that respects the rights of persons detained, family, volunteers and staff. Transparency and accountability will move Maryland towards more humane and restorative conditions without fear of retaliation.”

Along with MAJR, I am urging you to vote to pass SB0087 to make our prisons safer, more humane, and more responsive. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in support of SB0087.

I appreciate your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Benzer
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