

Testimony before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Supporting SB 123, Maryland Second Look Act, Feb. 1, 2024

Please support SB 123. My name is Edward Sabin. I am a retired state employee. I have been a volunteer at Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI) on and off for over 25 years. In doing so I've met a number of men serving long sentences who rehabilitated themselves. They are facilitators in the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) a volunteer program in which I also serve as a facilitator.

AVP workshops are small group experiences which improve communication skills, build a sense of community, and combat the macho ethic so common in prison. A strength of the program is that incarcerated people who participate in several workshops become facilitators and lead workshops themselves, a marketable job skill. Based on sound group dynamics principles, AVP workshops stress experiential learning rather than lectures and include both fun and serious exercises. Workshops produce a feeling that "we're all in this together." There's a waiting list of incarcerated men for these 18 hour long workshops at JCI.

AVP is practiced in 33 states around the country and in 45 foreign countries both inside prisons and in the community. Prison administrators generally support AVP where it is seen as promoting a positive atmosphere and safety in the prison. AVP produces mature and skilled leaders who are needed in the prison but more importantly in the outside community. These men and women serve as models for young people who need direction in their lives. For this reason, I heartily **support SB 123** to provide these leaders the opportunity to prove their rehabilitation and show leadership in the community. For more information go to www.avpusa.org.

Thank you for your service to the people of Maryland,

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