

**TESTIMONY ON HB1022
VOTING RIGHTS FOR ALL ACT**

**House Judiciary Committee
March 7, 2024**

SUPPORT

Submitted by: **Magdalena Tsiongas, MPH**

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett and members of the Judiciary Committee:

I, Magdalena Tsiongas, am testifying in support of HB1022, the Voting Rights for all Act. I am submitting this testimony as the family member of an incarcerated person in a Maryland prison, John.

John has spent 17 years incarcerated, since he was 19 years old. He has never had the ability to vote, and unless the law changes, he never will. Disenfranchisement of people incarcerated with a felony sends a very clear message to those in prison. That their voices do not matter to elected officials. That their experiences do not matter, and that no one is listening to them and their experiences.

It should come as no surprise, that in MD, 71% of the incarcerated population is Black, while only 30% of the general population is. This inevitably means the disenfranchisement of poor Black and Brown people specifically and intentionally. The right to vote should not be a negotiable one.

HB1022 would ensure that the right to vote is a right afforded to everyone in practice. It would allow incarcerated people the ability to have their voices heard in elections, elections that often directly impact the quality of their life and their freedom.

I urge you for a **favorable report** on HB1022.

Thank you