

John Duckett

JUSTICE FOR JAMARI

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0364 (Jamari's Law)

January 31, 2025

Written Testimony to the Maryland State Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Good morning, members of the committee. My name is John Duckett, and I write to you today as a grieving father. My son, Jamari Duckett, was taken from us far too soon. His life was tragically cut short by a drunk driver in July 2022.

I feel that the punishment did not fit the crime. The current law governing manslaughter by vehicle or vessel is very inadequate, with a maximum penalty of 10 years for a first conviction. It's a mere slap on the wrist for a crime that has left my family shattered.

That's why I implore you to support Senate Bill 0364, also known as Jamari's Law. This legislation proposes to increase the maximum period of imprisonment for a first conviction to 20 years and for a second or subsequent conviction, or having been previously convicted for certain other crimes, to 30 years.

This is not just a bill; it's a beacon of hope for families like mine who have been torn apart by DRUNK DRIVING. It's a declaration that we value human life, that we will not tolerate senseless tragedy, and that we will hold accountable those who put innocent lives at risk.

I know that no amount of time can bring back my son, but I BELIEVE that Jamari's Law will prevent others from suffering the same fate. It will send a strong message to would-be offenders that the consequences of their actions will be severe.

As I conclude, I want to leave you with a question: What is the value of a human life? Is it 10 years, 20 years, or 30 years? The answer is simple: it's PRICELESS.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 0364 and ensure that justice is served for victims of DRUNK DRIVING. Let us work together to create a safer, more just society where human life is valued above all else.

Thank you for your time, and I hope you will find it in your hearts to support this crucial legislation.

Sincerely,

John Duckett, Father of Jamari Duckett