



OUT FOR JUSTICE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 336:

District Court Commissioners and False Statements

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings and House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Angelina Scarton

DATE February 3rd, 2026

Members of the Committee, my name is Angelina Scarton. I live in District 30 in Anne Arundel County. I am a member of Out For Justice and support House Bill 336, which limits District Court Commissioners' ability to issue arrest warrants based solely on unverified civilian statements and strengthens accountability for false reports.

I am here because this exact failure in the system cost me nearly everything.

During the COVID pandemic, I was renting a commercial property when I discovered that my landlord was committing tax evasion and was not legally authorized to rent the unit. Once I confronted him and attempted to recover my deposit, he retaliated. Without any investigation or evidence, he went to a District Court Commissioner and had criminal charges filed against me. Those charges were approved based solely on his word. From that moment on, my life unraveled. I was immediately barred from returning to the property and prevented from filing charges against him myself.

The situation escalated when the landlord's friend physically attacked me. Instead of being treated as the victim, he stacked additional charges against me through the same process. Because charges were already pending and I was represented by a Public Defender, I was legally unable to go to the State's Attorney to correct the record or file charges of my own. My attorney could only respond to the accusations as written, not challenge how they were issued. No evidence was ever properly reviewed. No thorough investigation ever occurred.

Because this all happened during COVID, my trial dates were postponed repeatedly. I was eventually arrested on a charge that was later dismissed, but the arrest itself triggered a probation violation. That violation sent me to the Jessup Correctional Institution, where I was held for nearly four months. I was placed in solitary confinement, not because I had done anything wrong, but because they said they could not safely house me in the general population. I spent months isolated, waiting for charges that would later be dropped.



When I finally came home, the damage was already done. I lost my apartment. I lost my car. My credit score dropped to the low 400s. I was four days away from losing custody of my child due to the instability caused by my incarceration. To this day, I am trying to recover.

Nearly all of the charges against me were dismissed or dropped. I accepted Probation Before Judgment on one charge simply to move forward with my life. There was never a trial. My cases officially ended in August 2025. Yet even now, those charges continue to appear on background checks. They even cost me a six-figure job opportunity with NASA. They have blocked me from employment, housing, volunteering, and even becoming a foster parent. The punishment never ended, even though guilt was never established.

House Bill 336 addresses the precise system failure that allowed this to happen. No one should lose their freedom, their family stability, or their livelihood based on unverified accusations and unchecked retaliation. Warrants of arrest should require real evidence and real review before lives are destroyed.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 336.