

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL #HB1476

Independent Oversight and Review Board for Health Care of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities-Establishment

Date: 03/03/2020

From: Justice and Recovery Advocates Inc.

To: Chairman Luke Clippinger, Madame Chair Vanessa Atterbeary and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

Re: SUPPORT FOR BILL#HB1476

We are an organization that supports systems-involved individuals who suffer from substance use and mental health disorders and work statewide to improve health outcomes for these individuals on many levels including healthcare, treatment, therapy as well as support for their families and children. One of the biggest issues we have found with conditions of confinement in Maryland correctional facilities is the subpar healthcare which has proven to be broadly inadequate and inhumane. We also know that this is a constitutional violation and only due to the barriers the system has implemented incarcerated individuals have a very difficult time getting any legal recourse. We also know that Correctional Healthcare is not regulated as other healthcare entities are required to be and this is unacceptable. By not allowing for independent regulation you are allowing abuse and neglect and ultimately negatively affecting our communities. We work with this population after they have been medically and mentally debilitated and see first hand how this neglect and the lack of oversight impedes their recovery and their re-entry. It is really that simple! The majority of the population is incarcerated due to substance abuse and mental health issues and the majority will be returning to our communities and you have given them a no-win situation.

This independent oversight and regulation will serve to begin to correct some of these major issues and develop future plans so that incarcerated individuals will be given a fighting chance and also to hold accountable DPSCS who consistently skirts the issues and their own responsibility to care for the individuals under their CARE.

We are asking for a favorable report for HB1476.

Respectfully,

Justice and Recovery Advocates Inc. Active and Inactive Board, Clients and Partners

Julie Magers, President

Debbie Fling, Vice President

Jeannette Leaberry, Secretary

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Julie Polson Dickey, Member at Large

Jan Hummer, Member at Large

Marnie McNicholas, Member at Large