

**Randall Phillip Ainsworth**

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1268  
Before the House Appropriations Committee  
March 11, 2021**

Chairwoman McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the House Appropriations Committee, my name is Randall Ainsworth. I am a first-year law student at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law and the inaugural Elijah Cummings Scholar. As a member of Maryland Law's Diversity and Inclusions Scholars Initiative, I am pleased to join Dean Tobin in expressing my strong support for HB 1268.

I was born and raised in the city of Baltimore. My mother told me that I was born with 3 strikes against me. I was black, from a single parent home, and I was poor. Good enough was never enough so I had to strive to be better to level the playing field.

I have experienced prejudice, economic hardship, and homelessness. Much of my high school experience was spent finding places to complete assignments because I lived without electricity. Winter was always the hardest because daylight seemed few and far between. It was like a symbolism for my life.

One of my hardest memories was when I ran for high school student government and lost. It wasn't because I did not have the votes, tenacity, or experience. The deciding factor was that the other kid's dad was a judge. That made him more valuable to the school, more valuable to the world, more valuable than me.

This was one of those strikes that I was warned about.

His dad was not only a judge, but he was present. This was two of those strikes that I was warned about. It was a hard lesson to learn.

My story is one of many, from inner city youth who are bright, capable, and eager, but have those same three strikes against them. Kids who do not have fathers that are judges, or money to fix their problems.

The diversity and inclusion scholarship is an avenue to level the playing field. It afforded me the opportunity to attend law school without putting further strain on my family and a chance to begin life with one less strike lingering over my shoulder.

I was given an opportunity to attend the best law school in Maryland, fulfill my dream to become an attorney, and develop lifelong friendships with likeminded individuals.

The diversity and inclusion scholarship gave me a new definition of like kind. Like kind no longer means the poor kid, the kid without a father, or even the black kid. Like kind means other individuals with a dream, focus and a passion for the law.

I am grateful for this scholarship because of how it has benefited me, and I am an advocate because this scholarship program may make a difference in the lives of those coming behind me.

There are kids, right here in my community filled with violence, poverty, and hopelessness, who need hope. Kids who need a chance to be redeemers of their bloodlines and to change the dynamics of

their families. Without these scholarships many of us will never have a chance to reach our potential and many will stop dreaming.

My name is Randall Ainsworth. I am a University of Maryland Carey Law school student. In 2 years, I will be an attorney, the first in my family, and one day a judge. In my first year of law school, I was selected as the best advocate in the Constance Baker Motley Mock Trial Competition. The best advocate in the country. I am an agent of change and there are others like me. Like pearls we are a product of our environment. It is our environment that made us who we are and all we need is an opportunity. The Diversity and Inclusion Scholars Initiative gives us that opportunity.

For these reasons, I ask you to support HB 1268. Thank you!