



HOUSE BILL 1233

RICH GIBSON, HOWARD COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

POSITION: FAVORABLE HB 1233

March 5, 2021

My name is Rich Gibson, I am the State's Attorney for Howard County and the President of the Maryland State's Attorney's Association. Part of my obligations as State's Attorney is to advocate for laws that enhance the safety and well-being of our community; that is the reason I am writing today to support House Bill 1233.

We, as prosecutors, want to do all that we can to encourage the successful re-entry into society of individuals who have been convicted of crime. It is our deepest hope that our interaction with individuals triggers a change that results in them, upon paying their penance to society, rejoining our community and choosing an alternate path to become a positive, contributing member of the public. HB 1233, if enacted, will play an important role in increasing the odds that we, as prosecutors, do not re-encounter those individuals due to negative choices they might make after being released.

One amendment that I would strongly encourage and have already discussed with Delegate Feldmark is codifying protections in section (A)(1) of the bill that specifically prevent an inmate, soon to be released, from contacting individuals who were previously victimized by the defendant or witnesses who do not desire to be contacted by the defendant. We have an obligation to protect people from being revictimized. Inmates cannot be allowed to use our desire to see them successfully re-integrate society as a tool to engage in psychological

warfare. Putting in place specific language that prohibits a soon-to-be released inmate from contacting those who have testified against them, people who we know they have harmed in the past, and/or those who have no-contact orders in place is sound policy. I humbly request that the bill be amended to reflect the aforementioned protections.

I ask that the legislature give House Bill 1233 a favorable report with the critical amendments. Reconnecting inmates with a support structure prior to release, providing them with the tools they need to succeed such as help with transportation and identification is vital to reducing recidivism; and this bill goes a long way toward that goal.