

**MARLON AMPREY**  
*Legislative District 40*  
Baltimore City

Environment and Transportation  
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

**March 2nd, 2021**

**Testimony of Delegate Marlon Amprey in support of HB 917- Corrections – Restrictive Housing – Prohibition**

Dear Chairman Klippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The events of this past summer have put on display some of the startling shortcomings of our criminal justice system, and underscored the need for us to make serious changes to increase the equity of this system. Criminal justice reform has long been a priority for me, and is one of the major reasons why I sought this office in the first place.

**House Bill 917** is being introduced for the simple purpose of prohibiting the Department of Corrections from placing an inmate in restrictive housing (solitary confinement), with the exception of certain specified circumstances. This bill is intended to end the practice of using solitary confinement as a punitive measure against inmates, especially with those inmates who are suffering from serious mental illness.

The data present an unimpeachable case for the overuse and extensive damaging effects of solitary confinement on a person's mental state. With an average stay of about 45 days, spending 22 hours a day or more alone in a cell, inmates released from restrictive housing regularly show signs of post traumatic stress disorder, among other psychiatric conditions that may have been present even before being placed in solitary confinement.


Furthermore, these inmates receive little to no psychiatric support upon being released from restrictive housing or even from prison outright. Instead of being rehabilitated for reentry into society, inmates who spend long periods of time in solitary confinement are released from prison mentally broken, with little or no support system. Often, these individuals simply end up back in the prison system after reoffending post release.

If we are able to affect any lasting improvements to this system, it is absolutely crucial that we address the feedback loop that currently exists where incarcerated individuals are released into

society lacking skills and often with serious mental issues, only to reoffend and end up back in the system. While it is only a step in the right direction and not a complete solution, this bill will help break that cycle by preventing inmates from suffering undue mental trauma before being released.

**I urge a favorable report on House Bill 917**

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marlon Amprey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a distinct "A".

Delegate Marlon Amprey  
40<sup>th</sup> Legislative District - MD