



HB260- Support

January 20, 2021

Delegate Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support for House Bill 260 – Court – Jury Service – Disqualification

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members:

As the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, I stand in strong support of House Bill 26, which, if passed, alter the circumstances under which an individual may be disqualified for jury service by repealing provisions that disqualify individuals who received a sentence of imprisonment for more than one year or have pending charges for crimes punishable by imprisonment for more than one year.

All Marylanders who have completed their criminal sentence already have some of their rights restored, such as the right to vote. These same individuals deserve to have the right to serve on a jury. Existing law does not allow an individual from jury service who has been convicted of or has a charge pending for a crime punishable by a term of imprisonment exceeding one year.

Proponents of continuing to bar those with felony convictions from serving on juries often argue that their experience with the criminal justice system would automatically bias them against the state and prosecuting office. A quantitative research study conducted by John Binnall did not find evidence to support that idea. In fact, it was found that "results suggest that on theoretically derived measures of deliberation structure, deliberation content, and juror perceptions, diverse juries (including felon-jurors) performed as well as homogenous juries."¹

Expanding the juror pool through the expansion of rights of individuals who have served their criminal sentence is a critical step toward restoring constitutional rights. This legislation promotes and represents equitable participation in our justice system.

For these reason, I urge you to consider a favorable report for House Bill 260.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marilyn J. Mosby".

Marilyn J. Mosby, States Attorney Baltimore City

¹ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1068316X.2018.1528359?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

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