Maryland State Board of Victim Services

100 Community Place, Crownsville, MD 21032

Steven J. Kelly, Esq.
Chair

March 9, 2021

Chair Luke H. Clippinger, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee
Room 101, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **HOUSE BILL 1233: Correctional Services - Inmates - Intake and Release
Requirements (Reentry Success Act of 2021)
LETTER OF INFORMATION**

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland State Board of Victim Services submits this letter of information with regards to House Bill
1233 sponsored by Delegate Feldmark. House Bill 1233 would "require the Division of Correction to
provide screening for and access to private mediation between a certain inmate and an individual identified
by the inmate as essential for the successful reentry of the inmate into society." As currently proposed, the
Maryland State Board of Victim Services is not in favor of House Bill 1233, and recommends an
amendment be made to clearly define who an "essential" individual is in order to protect victims and
witnesses who do not wish to be contacted by an inmate.

The Board has been informed there is a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in place between the
Department of Correction and a mediation program that excludes victims from engaging in mediation. As
currently proposed, House Bill 1233 does not include the specifics to protect victims, which could
potentially allow for an inmate to use a loophole to contact or engage with a victim, regardless of the MOU
in place. The Board is supportive of successful reentry of eligible offenders, but wants to ensure it is not at
the expense of the victim.

The mission of the Maryland State Board of Victim Services is to ensure crime victims in Maryland
receive justice and are treated with dignity and compassion through comprehensive victim services, and
works to ensure victims receive the rights afforded to them. For these reasons, the Maryland State Board of
Victim Services recommends an amendment to House Bill 1233 in order to protect the rights and privacy
of crime victims.

Sincerely,

Steven J. Kelly, Esq.
Chair