

# JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

*Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes*

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 89:**

### **CORRECTIONAL SERVICES – DIMINUTION CREDITS – EDUCATION**

TO: Hon. Luke Clippinger, Chair, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Daphne Alston, Organizer, Moms Against Murdered Sons and Daughters (MOMs)

DATE: January 14, 2021

My name is Daphe Alston and I am an organizer with “MOMs,” Moms Against Murdered Sons and Daughters. I support House Bill 89 as a means to reimaging opportunities for our incarcerated populations.

Our organization was developed out of our genuine desire to create change in Baltimore City, as mothers who have lost children to violence in our community. Our mission and vision are to create safe neighborhoods where families and children can not merely survive but also thrive. Our programs deliver violence education, awareness and prevention, and victim support services.

On July 14, 2008, in Joppatown, my son was gunned down and brutally murdered by boys the age of what I would consider, children. While I suffered varying emotions, ranging from anger to grief, I recognize that there are many reasons that contributed to the event that resulted in my son’s death. One of those contributing factors is the education system.

As a young woman, growing up in Baltimore myself, I was a part of a class of the first students to integrate Dundalk. Slowly, the Baltimore City School System has created educational hierarchies that have left many of our students without basic knowledge to obtain jobs or obtain meaningful employment. This lack of education coupled with the environment of growing up in Baltimore sets the stage for many of the children living in our communities. Society sets the stage and then a person creates the action or response to that environment already facilitated by society.

With the overwhelming culture of violence and lack of education, many of our young people have chosen to make decisions solely off their environment and often this leads to violent actions like the ones taken against my son. As a mother of a son who was brutally murdered, I believe that giving individuals access to education - one of the environmental factors that contributes to crime - will not only be beneficial for incarcerated individuals but will also make them less likely to commit crimes in the future. For these reasons, I request a favorable report on House Bill 89.