

Hello Madam Chair and members of this committee my name is Daniela Dinkins and I appreciate you taking the time to hear me today.

I was previously a Group Life Manager I but now I am a Case Management Specialist at Cheltenham and a longtime member of Afscme Local 3167. I have worked for the Department of Juvenile Services for 12 years.

I am here asking the members of this committee to support the addition of several DJS Classifications outlined in the proposed bill before you today into CORS retirement system. Prior to being a Case Management Specialist I was a Group Life Manger I. This position was not only dangerous, but a position that required me to deal with ensuring the safety of the youths as well as the staff on a consistent basis. This position is equivalent to a Lieutenant in the Maryland Prison system.

While this committee may not be fully aware this Group Life Manager I and II's are front line workers. Group Life Managers when all residential staff need assistance crisis or when intervention is need. This requires Group Life Managers to be knowledgeable at everyone's position and be able to assist in the time of need with all of Maryland at-risk youth. While this positon may not require a college degree it is still a skilled position that requires the individual to gain knowledge on the position for an extensive amount of time.

The youth that we deal with on a daily basis suffer from severe trauma and mental health issues that in the Group Life Manager's position are constantly tasked to handle. This in return made my daily job exhausting and I felt like I could not address the needs of the individuals that I signed up to assist with rehabilitate. I have committed

my life to work with at-risk youth but in a capacity where I feel like I am making a difference.

This position should be staffed with the most dedicated and knowledgeable individuals to work with Maryland's at risk youth. Group Life Managers are the nucleus of the facilities for the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. When I was a Group Life Manager I often felt myself having to work with new individuals on a consistence because of the lack of retention in this position. Very often this is caused by losing hard working dedicated individuals to DPSCS or other agencies in the surrounding areas that do the exact same position, require the exact education, but have been awarded with 20 year retirement. In closing I am asking that this committee support the bill that will allow me and my talented coworkers the opportunity to be a member of CORS. Thanks for your time and consideration today.