

SB0704, Conditions of Pretrial Release – Home Detention Monitoring – Alterations and Extension  
Testimony in Support

To: Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
From: Arielle Juberg, Baltimore, MD 21234

My name is Arielle Juberg. I am a resident of Baltimore County in District 8. I belong to Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) in Baltimore. SURJ is working in collaboration with Out for Justice and the Job Opportunities Task Force. I am testifying in **support** of SB0704, Conditions of Pretrial Release – Home Detention Monitoring – Alterations and Extension.

SB0704 matters to me because our justice system should not treat people differently based upon their income or the amount in their bank account. Maryland residents who are awaiting trial are in jail cells because they cannot afford home detention monitoring fees. When a person is arrested and accused of a criminal offense, a judge decides whether to release or detain the person and, if the judge releases the person, what conditions to impose. As COVID-19 continues to spread, judges have increasingly opted for home detention and electronic monitoring. This allows a person to stay out of jail, while imposing other constraints on the person's liberty and movement.

However, home detention and electronic monitoring come at a steep price: \$11–17 per day, which can add up to *over \$500 per month*, as the [Baltimore Sun reported in August 2020](#). These costs add up to even more as the pandemic has caused delays and closures, meaning those charged with crimes will be in home detention for longer.

It doesn't have to be this way. Effective January, 2021, Baltimore County eliminated the home monitoring fees. [Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski explained](#) clearly why this decision was made: *“This is an issue of simple fairness. Individuals on home detention, most of whom are individuals not convicted and awaiting adjudication of non-violent crime charges, should not have to face additional financial burdens...Expensive home monitoring fees create unnecessary impediments, and the elimination of home monitoring fees will better allow these residents to support themselves and their families.”* Additionally, the cost for eliminating the fees in the county (\$538,000 per year) was much lower than if those people were held in the detention center (more than \$3 million per year). Therefore, eliminating the fees or providing funding for those who need it may allow the state to put more money into other necessities.

Last year, Senate Bill 23 provided funding for home detention and electronic monitoring, but this only applied to fiscal year 2022. While COVID-19 may have been the catalyst for this policy, it should be continued for moral, social, and financial reasons. For all these reasons, I am encouraging you to vote **in support** of SB0704. Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.