

Members of the Senate,

I joined Courtwatch PG in the Fall of 2020 as a high schooler, and have been working with them ever since. In that time, I've observed hundreds of bond review hearings without ever setting foot in the courthouse. Even without our physical presence, it is clear that Courtwatch PG's impact has been felt throughout the Prince George's County judiciary system. The hundreds of accountability letters that we've sent to judges, prosecutors, police chiefs and other key actors have visibly changed the way bond review hearings function, something that has had a tangible impact on the lives of our community members and their loved ones. For instance, in the months after we began calling out judges and State's Attorney's for not using the option of unsecured bonds and for holding loved ones unnecessarily without a chance of release before their trial, we've recorded a significant increase in the amount of unsecured bonds offered and the number of people who wouldn't have to spend any more time behind bars. Even a few days in jail (or the best-case scenario for how long Pretrial Services will take to review someone's case) and out of work can cost someone their job, so this small change has saved many families from economic instability. However, none of Courtwatch PG's work would have been possible without virtual access to court. Our members courtwatch from around the country, and even those located in the DMV have varying abilities to travel to the courthouse. Virtual access is what has allowed Courtwatch PG to hold key actors accountable and push back against the otherwise invisible violations of people's lives that take place in courtrooms

every day. I urge you to ensure permanent virtual access to Maryland courts for the sake of our communities and loved ones.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter of vital importance.

Josh Rosenberg