

House Bill 240- Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Darryl Webster

Position: FAV

Written testimony HB240 Correctional Officers' Retirement System
- Special Death Benefits – Applicability

Appropriations Committee- 3-16-23 1 pm

Letter of Support

Good morning Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Darryl Webster; I am a Commissioner for Somerset County District 2 and retired Maryland Division of Corrections employee with 30 years of service. I am also a friend of the Collins family and I am here in support of House Bill 240.

I met Officer Gregory Collins in 1998 at Eastern Correctional Institution where we were both employed. I was a supervisor on the same shift as Greg. He and I were both on the Tactical Team. Greg was just the type of person you knew you could count on, and that was very important to me..... Over time we became friends.

3 short years after being hired at ECI, on June 4, 2001, Greg was found shot and killed in his pickup truck not far from his family home in Vienna, Maryland..... For 18 years the case went unsolved.Think about this for a minute, married just over 3 years, husband murdered, infant child, not knowing who or why..... Had to be extremely stressful and downright terrifying for Greg's wife Lena and the entire family.

For quite some time his bullet riddled truck sat at the Maryland State Police Barracks in Easton and when in the area I would look at his truck

and just think “somebody has to know something, they just aren’t talking”.

Finally, a suspect was identified and arrested for Greg’s murder..... The suspect was tried and found guilty of 1st and 2nd degree murder along with other charges, and is now serving life without the possibility of parole..... The suspect was a member of the DMI gang and committed the murder for reasons associated with the gang.

On October 8, 2021 Anne Harvey, Acting Commissioner of Corrections, officially declared the death of Officer Gregory Collins a line of duty death.

There is so much more to this case I could say but my time is about up..... I think you all understand the significance of what we are pursuing here today.

In closing: Nearly 22 years have passed since Officer Collins was murdered and a lot has been learned by the family and those of us close to them.....We thank you for your time and consideration and we are asking for a favorable decision for House Bill 240.

HB240 Testimony - Lena (Collins) Williams.pdf

Uploaded by: Lena Williams

Position: FAV

- Good afternoon, Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Appropriations Committee.
- My name is Lena Williams, the mother of Sydney Collins, the widow of Correctional Officer Gregory Collins. Greg was a former Marine, a former Navy Seabee and a member of the Maryland Army National Guard at the time of his death.
- For those who are not familiar with my story, just after midnight on June 4, 2001, my husband left his job as a correctional officer at Eastern Correctional Institution. He never made it home.
- After hours of waiting, I began making phone calls to friends, family, and ultimately the police to report him missing.
- My husband was found murdered, he was shot and killed on his way home, and his killer was not arrested for another 18 years.
- That day has and will forever continue to change my life. As a new mother at 27 years old, I was made a widow. I instantly became a single parent and sole provider to our infant daughter. An unbearable change caused by a horrific act.
- When our daughter, Sydney was old enough to understand our reality, I had to tell her that her father was murdered. There were no answers to bring her closure, to ease the pain, tears, emptiness, and loss she felt. A conversation a mother should

never have to have with her child. A child who could not possibly understand or process why her father was murdered.

- This tragedy will always be with me. My daughter and I have suffered great emotional stress for the past 22 years. We were robbed of our life with Greg.
- It was not until a suspect was identified, arrested, and convicted that anyone understood Greg was killed because he had been a correctional officer and was determined to be an in the line of duty death. A hit had been put out on him by a former inmate and gang member.
- Had this information been available at the time of Greg’s death, I would have been able to apply for the Correctional Officer’s Retirement System Special Death Benefit for individuals who were killed because of their job.
- While no one should have to experience the loss my daughter, our family, Greg’s coworkers, and our friends went through, when such tragedies occur, the availability of the death benefit aids those who have suffered the loss of a loved one.
- I now find myself in a position to support a bill that is intended to aid my family. We unfortunately lost Greg, who died by the hands of another, solely because of the career that he chose.

- In conclusion, I thank you for your time and ask that you provide a FAVORABLE report for House Bill 240.

G COLLINS.pdf

Uploaded by: Ronald Dryden

Position: FAV

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes and Vice Chair Chang and members of the Appropriation committee.

My name is Ronnie Dryden, retired Deputy Warden at ECI. At the time of Officer Gregory Collins' murder on 6/4/2001, I was Security Chief. No one at ECI could have imagined what happened when Officer Collins went missing for over 18 hours.

When Officer Collins was found murdered with gunshot wounds, we were astonished. Afterwards, a few others and I met with Lena that night at the family home with their 5 month old daughter, Sydney, who is now 22 years old and graduated from Salisbury University. It was one of the saddest moments I have had to encounter involving a work family.

We met with Maryland State Police periodically for years without any leads. However, on September 13, 2019, Michael Ingersoll (Spider) was arrested for the murder of Officer Collins, and found guilty on 6/4/2021. Ironically, 20 years to the day of the murder.

It was ruled as a line of duty death, as it was a validated hit on Officer Collins' life from the gang, DMI (Dead Men Incorporated) and carried out by a released inmate who in his words vowed to kill Collins when he got out. He did indeed carry out this heinous murder. Ingersoll rose in the ranks of DMI in return for murdering Officer Collins. This was sanctioned by Perry Roark, founder of DMI.

As a result of this senseless killing, Lena and Sydney's lives along with their extended family, as well as Officer Collins' father and family were destroyed.

Officer Collins was a former Marine, who fought in Desert Storm, as well as served as a Navy Sea Bee. At the time of Officer Collins death, he was active in the Maryland National Guard. As a matter of fact, Officer Collins had been on National Guard drills Sunday, and returned to ECI on Sunday evening on the 4 – 12 Shift and murdered on Monday morning on his way home to his family. This murder has haunted us in the Division of Correction since 2001.

Officer Collins was an excellent officer with his military background and a huge loss to the Division of Correction.

I would like to thank you for your time and ask for your support of HB 240.

Ronald B. Dryden