

Testimony of Walter Pinkney on SB97

Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 7, 2023 1pm

The Jury Disqualification Bill

Hello Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, my name is Walter Pinkney, and I am here to voice my support for Senator Carter's bill, SB30. I am 48 yr old and I live in Northeast Baltimore on Broadway near Federal Street and Fells Point.

I understand this bill will give people like me a chance to serve on a jury in the State of Maryland, a civic duty which I am currently unable to partake in.

I was convicted when I was 25 of Second Degree Murder in Baltimore City back in 1999. I served 15 years in jail spending most of my time in the Annex in Jessup and in North Branch Correctional Institution in Cumberland, and then I spent 5 years on probation. I got out in 2012, and my probation ended in 2017.

Once I got out, I got a job working for a clothing company in Baltimore. I worked there 8 years and became

a manager in the company. I then changed to work for a roofing company, where I have been employed since 2020. I have not been arrested or charged with any crimes since I was released from jail. I have lived a clean life and I have paid my debt to society.

When I got out, I learned I was eligible to vote in elections, but I also learned that I am not allowed to serve on a jury because of my felony convictions.

I think serving on a jury is one of the rights that all Americans can be proud of. When you are on a jury, you play an important role at determining whether or not a person is guilty of a crime. This is something I am looking forward to doing, if Senator Carter's bill becomes law.

I understand that her bill will allow a former felon to serve on a jury as long as they have completed their sentence, and finished their probation, and don't have any charges pending against them. I think that would be a fair law.

I think that, if I were on a jury, I would listen to all the facts and make a fair judgement about the innocence or

guilt of the person charged, and I don't think I would be partial to the person charged. I would be fair and would look at the facts that I heard in court.

Like I said, I totally turned my life around. I currently work for a roofing company in Baltimore, I have a wife and two children, one grandchild.

I have learned my lesson and served my time, and I hope to be able to take advantage of the right to serve on juries in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you.

Sincerely,

Walter Pinkney

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