

To the members of the House and Senate in Maryland:

I want to start off by thanking you for your time for reading my statement regarding the abolishment of Felony Murder. According to justia.com the definition of felony murder is “[It] is a rule that allows a defendant to be charged with first-degree murder for a killing that occurs during a dangerous felony, even if the defendant is not the killer. The felony murder rule applies only to those crimes that are considered “inherently dangerous,” as the rationale underlying the felony murder rule is that certain crimes are so dangerous that society wants to deter individuals from engaging in them altogether. Thus, when a person participates in an inherently dangerous crime, he or she may be held responsible for the fatal consequences of that crime, even if someone else caused the actual death.”

Please take a second and think to yourself: Would you want to be blamed and held accountable for the consequences of someone else’s wrongdoings? Any person would say no or either say that they would take accountability for their own actions, but either way no one wants to be held responsible for something that they did not do. The way I see it, it’s an escape mechanism so no through investigation can be conducted. I thought we were all innocent until proven guilty. Felony murder is a contradiction to everyone’s free will. Abolishing felony murder will not take away the “inherently dangerous” crime of murder, but it will give the opportunity for those that engage in dangerous crimes to be responsible for their wrongdoings, for what they committed that can be proven with the right evidence. Felony murder sentences do not give individuals the opportunity to change and make atonement for their wrongdoings. Isn’t that what the criminal justice system is for? To help those who commit these crimes to change and reform so it doesn’t happen again? Especially those younger generations who are not fully developed. Don’t they deserve a chance to have a fair life? Its like you mess up real bad one time and your entire life is gone. I can see repeat offenders getting the sentence, but for first time offenders they deserve a chance to make it right.

My brother was charged with Felony Murder back in 2019 at the age 24. He was at home when individuals tried to rob him. During the robbing, my brothers’ best friend was killed right in front of him, yet he didn’t pull the trigger and kill him, someone else did. The end result: my brother is now serving a 30-year prison sentence for felony murder. Now the world thinks he is the crazy killer, but all he was trying to do was protect himself, his best friend, and his home. My brother isn’t a violent person. He was just trying to find his way in life like everyone else. Did he make the best decisions all the time? No he didn’t, but to have to carry the murder and serve time for someone that he loved an cared for deeply isn’t fair.

Every action has a reaction and people do need to be held accountable for their wrongdoings. The abolishment of Felony Murder would allow people to be held accountable for what they did if proven by evidence. It would allow individuals to be treated as innocent until proven guilty. The abolishment shouldn’t only be applied to future cases but also cases in the past where the felony murder rule was misused. You never know what someone is capable of after realizing their wrongdoings and wanting to make a change in this world but society would never know because felony murder takes away that chance. If you believe in second chances, then abolishing felony murder would be the first step in making that change.