

January 22nd, 2023
108 N Quince Avenue
Highland Springs, VA, 23075

Testimony of Odessa Wilson
In favor of: S.B.43/H.B.133

My name is Odessa Wilson. I am a resident of Highland Springs, Virginia. I recently received my Bachelors of Science in Psychology from Colorado Technical University. I am a part of the Life After Release Program based out of Prince George County, Maryland. I am writing in support of S.B.43/H.B.133. I support this bill because it is important that court hearings are as transparent and judges are as accountable for their decisions as possible. Continuing the allowance of remote access to court hearings will ensure that more people will have the ability to observe the way the justice system works. This in turn would lead to an overall more fair and impartial justice system in the future.

I am writing to support this bill due to the things that have been brought to my attention during my time as a court watcher. Many injustices are experienced everyday such as having to remain in jail due to an unpayable bond or being denied medication only to be sent to mental health court to receive more jail time. These injustices also include things such as being incarcerated from missing hearing notices due to homelessness. This bill is essential because allowing people observe a court of law in action will reduce the chances of this happening. The fact of the matter is that these injustices often happen to the Black and Brown people within our communities. In addition to that the cost of transportation is steadily rising which makes remote access to court hearings all the more relevant. The entire process makes it more convenient and allows for the right to open and public court, especially to those who have work and other circumstances within daily life.

I am in strong belief that the legislators overseeing this should support the bill as it would allow impartiality and transparency within the court system. It is something that I believe should be a goal to be reached in the near future. Also, many people can not afford public transportation or can't afford to take time off of work to appear in person. This would cause the population of court to be unfair and jagged. By continuing to allow remote access more individuals, no matter their circumstances, can attend court hearings for themselves or family members.

For the reasons i mentioned above i am in support of S.B.43/H.B.133. I truly hope that the Judicial Commitee votes in favor as well.

Thank your for your time and consideration.

Odessa Wilsonc