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# Kimberly Haven

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January 20, 2023

Chairman Will Smith  
Vice Chairman Jeff Waldstreicher  
Senate Judicial Proceeding Committee

Senate Bill 97 –  
Jury Disqualification  
**POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Members of the Senate Judicial Proceeding Committee,

My name is Kimberly Haven, and ***I offer this testimony in support of SB 97.***

*Jury service is one of the most important civic duties in our country.* I am here today on behalf of myself as well as thousands of Maryland citizens who are excluded from doing our civic duty simply because of a prior felony conviction.

Every year, I get a jury summons. Every year, I must submit all kinds of documentation about my criminal record. And every year, I get told “No thanks.”

The disqualification simply because of a prior felony conviction is rooted solely in unsupported by evidence bias and stigmatization. The rationale I hear on this topic is a fear of bias. This would have you believe that we would sympathize with a defendant and even have resentment toward the prosecution. If we were allowed to serve, we would acquit in all cases, and destroy the impartiality of the jury process.

Evidence does not support this – Disqualifying someone with a felony conviction does not make our justice system fairer or just. What it does do, is keep people like me confined to permanent second-class citizen status. It is a bad solution to a nonexistent problem

Jury service is not only a duty of citizens of our country, but also a right protected by our Constitution. I did not stop being a citizen because I have a felony conviction.

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There is no rationale...there is no evidence to support. But it is a duty, it is a responsibility, and it is one that I, and the thousands like me, would be able to perform under SB 97.

For these reasons and on behalf of all of our community members who continue to live under draconian collateral consequences from our past, ***I urge a favorable report on SB 97.***

Respectfully submitted,

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