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*The Maryland House of Delegates*  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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RE: HB64 Office of the Attorney General - Correctional Ombudsman

Dear Chairman Clippinger, and members of the House Judiciary and Health and Government Operations Committees,

I submit this letter in support of HB64 titled Office of the Attorney General – Correctional Ombudsmen.

During my time in the legislature, I have learned so much from my colleagues, constituents, and the citizens of Maryland. I regularly receive mail from incarcerated Marylanders and their families citing concerns ranging from access to mental and physical health services, living conditions, safety and allegations of basic civil rights violations.

This legislation would create and empower an Ombudsmen position in the Attorney General’s office to create oversight for our state prisons. Much like the Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit which was established in to 2002 to oversee our youth in the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services.

Recent history has exacerbated the need for oversight. During the COVID pandemic my office struggled to answer family members questions or to get centralized data of whether there were masks, sanitation and appropriate precautions taken to protect the health of incarcerated individuals. More recently we learned of the horrific conditions of a pregnant inmate giving birth on the floor of one of our local jail cells while her cries for help went unanswered.

While this bill does not directly address local jails throughout the State it will certainly be a catalyst for establishing a reasonable standard of care.

At present our citizens lack transparency and accountability of what occurs “Behind the Walls” in our state corrections facilities. As policy makers it is incumbent upon us to have access to this information because as we know we cannot legislate what we cannot see.

Respectfully Submitted,

Delegate Debra Davis