

January 18, 2023

House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 0064
Correctional Ombudsman Bill
Sponsor Delegate Debra Davis

Dear Committee Members:

Having served over forty-two consecutive years in Maryland's prison system, I support the Office of Attorney General - Correctional Ombudsman Bill. There is a need for a non-partisan agent to oversee the implementation of statutory and regulatory provisions in this State's correctional facilities. Whether prisoner or correctional staff, human beings are subject to error and typically act according to what is inspected as opposed to what is expected.

I can attest to shortcomings of prisoners, staff, and procedures. Will some prisoners lie, cheat, and violate rules? Will some staff violate rules and neglect duties? Do facilities receive prior notice to prepare for audits? Do individuals and departments function optimally at all times? There are a host of reasons why failings occur.

The legislature has enacted laws governing operations of prison facilities. Ignoring the probability that problems exist is not in the interest of public safety and undermines the penological justifications of imprisonment. More importantly, Correctional staff should be able to work and prisoners should be able to live in productive and safe environments.

This can only be accomplished by having a neutral party to investigate, oversee, and mediate reasonable concerns with implementation of statutory and regulatory provisions. It is my sincere hope that you will consider this testimony and pass this Bill to the floor for a vote.

Truly yours,

Gordon R. Pack, Jr.