



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB499
Workgroup to Study Reentry

February 21, 2023

Senator William C. Smith
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony of Marian House in Support of SB499

Dear Chairman Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher,
and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Marian House is a holistic, healing community for women and their children who are in need of housing and support services. Marian House provides comprehensive support services to assist women with experiences of trauma, including poverty, substance abuse, and incarceration. **I write to urge you to support Senate Bill 499 – Workgroup to Study Reentry.**

Over forty years ago, Marian House was opened to provide reentry supports for women leaving incarceration as Sisters and laywomen recognized that lack of support contributed to recidivism rates. Today, we have also expanded to serve women with histories of trauma including homelessness, incarceration, neglect, substance abuse and mental health needs. Since our opening, we have assisted women who have been victims of crime in reinventing and rebuilding themselves through services such as: counseling, substance abuse treatment, job training and providing both long and short-term housing. All the women we have served have overcome obstacles on their journeys to become contributing members of society in the Baltimore area.

In FY2022 alone, DPSCS released 4,301 Marylanders from prison. Although these individuals have already completed their terms of confinement, they continue to pay a price and face barriers as they try to rebuild their life after release. This Workgroup can help inform how we as a state help and/or inhibit someone's successful reentry. We must move away from a policy framework that focuses on punishment as a tool for controlling risk in favor of a holistic framework that focuses on human rights, harm reduction, and the social, political, and economic reintegration of individuals who were incarcerated. On behalf of the women we serve at Marian House, I respectfully urge you to take the call to action in **SUPPORT of SB499**

Thank you for your support,

Katie Allston, LCSW-C
President and C.E.O.