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To the Maryland General Assembly Judicial Proceedings and Judiciary Committees

IN FAVOR – Correctional Ombudsman Bill # SB0134 / HB0297

My name is Kion Eason and I am a resident of Maryland (21206 zip code), and have been incarcerated for 23 years, sentence as an Emerging Adult at age 20. Throughout my incarceration, I have been in three different regions Eastern Correctional Institution (ECI), Hagerstown (MCTC), Jessup (JCI).

The inadequate support service for incarcerated individuals is one consistent aspect of imprisonment that I have witnessed my entire incarceration. I am in support of a favorable vote of the Correctional Ombudsman bill, for the much needed accountability and oversight. This bill will provide much-needed oversight for staff (Custody, Medical, Dietary, Classification, Case Management, Maintenance etc.), and is paramount to ensure equitable treatment in Maryland facilities.

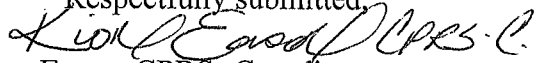
Further, I have suffered negligence from Medical providers, which has lead to severe muscle atrophy to my right leg. The lack of oversight for a quicker treatment response caused scar tissue to develop on my Achilles tendon. The Orthopedic Specialist refused to perform surgery due to the month long lapse caused by medical provider/DPSCS scheduling. This is just one instance of medical time lapse that has affected my health. However, this kind of delay with medical has been consistent in all three regions that I resided.

Meanwhile, inter- institution department accountability has been void, first, Per Case Management Manual, I am unable to ARP Case Manager decisions. In addition, the following other areas are in need of oversight and accountability:

- Medical issues through ARP/IGO process takes so long that the health issue becomes worse;
- Limited programs run by social work, psyche. , and Case management to remedy mental health or substance abuse disorders;
- No vocational training for general population to support successful reentry;
- Housing units are filled with and mold, and ceilings are literally falling apart from roof leaks;
- Inmate Grievance Office (IGO) is not a separate agency, Due Process cannot be fair and impartial when DPSCS employees oversee complaints of other DPSCS staff.

Moreover, an independent oversight committee would ensure that the inter-agencies are actually adhering to the policies and procedures that are already on the books. This oversight committee will strengthen professional responsibility and accountability, while also improving public safety. By allowing the Ombudsman bill to pass, guarantees equal protection to all citizens that are in custody in Maryland.

In closing, I fully support this innovative approach to making Maryland a safer place for all of its residents. Furthermore, I am requesting that a favorable vote in support for Correctional Ombudsman bill this legislative session.

Respectfully submitted,

Kion Eason, CPRS- Coordinator