



## **Consultants for Change**

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### **Testimony Supporting House Bill 37 Ashley McSwain, President, Consultants for Change & Founder March 7, 2024**

As a resident of Maryland, President of Consultants for Change, a dynamic consulting firm, current Executive Director of New Hope Housing, and former Executive Director of Community Family Life Services, a nonprofit serving women returning home following a period of incarceration, I fully support and urge the House Judiciary Committee to favorably report on House Bill 37.

I have spent over 30 years in the social services field and six years as a probation officer, providing services to help women (and men) return and stay home after incarceration. I have seen first-hand that a well-coordinated, outcomes-focused, and evidence-based approach is required to assist returning citizens. Women face unique challenges that require specific responses from multiple state and local government agencies and community-based programs. Housing, employment, healthcare, substance abuse and mental health services, HIV/AIDS treatment, and family reunification are critical needs for returning women citizens.

House Bill 37 will help our state move boldly toward the approach I mentioned by establishing a commission to create a comprehensive 5-year plan and conduct a pilot project to demonstrate the effectiveness of local reentry navigators to help them receive support from multiple systems.

The commission is our best opportunity to represent the voice of thousands of women returning citizens in Maryland who feel voiceless and live on the margins of society.

In conclusion, I ask you to report favorably on House Bill 37, give them a voice, and show them that we care about their health, wellness, safety, security, and future.

**Consultants 4 Change urges the  
Judiciary Committee to  
report favorably on House Bill 37**