

**TESTIMONY ON HB565
MARYLAND DEATHS in CUSTODY OVERSIGHT BOARD**

**House Judiciary Committee
March 7, 2024**

SUPPORT

Submitted by: **Magdalena Tsiongas, MPH**

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett and members of the Judiciary Committee:

I, Magdalena Tsiongas, am testifying in support of HB565, the Maryland Deaths in Custody Oversight Board. I am submitting this testimony as the family member of an incarcerated person in a Maryland prison.

Creation of the Maryland Deaths in Custody Oversight Board would support transparent reporting of deaths in MD prisons and help to address the root causes of deaths in the Department of Public Safety and Corrections facilities.

For families who have loved ones behind bars, even a day without hearing from them immediately sends us into hyperdrive, worrying about what might have happened to them. I can only imagine the pain at losing a loved one behind bars and having no understanding of what happened and no accountability from those in power.

A poll commissioned by FAMM found that 82% of the public supports independent prison oversight, which is reflected in the fact that Maryland is joining various states and the federal level in considering this type of reform.

I urge **a favorable report on HB565** for improved oversight on in-custody deaths.

Thank you