



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the
Judiciary Committee
on
House Bill 61
March 7, 2024
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to support restorative justice for adjudicated individuals in Maryland. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are a faith community with congregations in every jurisdiction of our State.

Our community has engaged in a ministry to incarcerated individuals at Jessup since 1985, the Community of St. Dysmas. A goal of that effort is better outcomes for the incarcerated, and their communities. We hold what we believe can be a State interest in restorative justice, reducing recidivism and reclaiming human life for productive, thriving social engagement.

Those who have served in the pastoral office of that congregation have repeatedly reported that upon release, the previously incarcerated will have little to no social supports for community re-entry. "Rehabilitation" of the adjudicated will not be possible if the time on either of release has not been organized for social and economic achievement.

House Bill 61 would address this omission in what society likes to call "corrections" with support services on either side of release and probation. Services identified in the DLS fiscal note that our experience working on the inside indicates are currently missing and typically needed are: (3) *information regarding housing*; (4) *assistance in obtaining transportation*; (5) *information regarding health care*; (6) *legal assistance, including legal assistance related to child support*; (7) *anger management counseling*; (8) *mental health services*; (9) *substance abuse counseling and prevention services*; (10) *employment assistance*; and (11) *financial literacy courses and training*.

"Rehabilitative" and "Correctional" policies will not succeed without investment in the human subjects of their referents. Make the goal of adjudication restorative at least as much as punitive. Please give **House Bill 61** your favorable report.

Lee Hudson