

To Whom It May Concern:

I strongly support the creation of the position of ombudsman because it is a role that is designed to encourage objectivity, clarity, and an unbiased perspective to support inmates, their families, the community, and by extension, penal institutions, through advocacy.

As a longtime advocate for persons who have been incarcerated in the penal system in Maryland, I have developed a perspective that supports the implementation of legal and human rights for inmates. My opinions regarding penal institutions have strongly influenced my advocacy work on behalf of family and friends who have been designated as inmates.

As a result, I know that all persons who have encounters with criminal justice must have representation to ensure a minimal level of fair, equitable, and humane treatment at the hands of the penal institution. This is where an ombudsman can effectively serve by facilitating open communication and accountability to create an environment where better treatment of inmates, whose human rights must be protected, is possible.

The documented tendency for many penal institutions to decrease or ignore family support for inmates can be resisted effectively by an objective third party: an ombudsman whose participation can increase family engagement by communicating between the institutions and the families. Additionally, an ombudsman has the ability to increase community engagement, a factor that studies have shown to reduce inmate recidivism.

There are no losers when an ombudsman is at work -- all parties benefit: inmate, family, institution, and society benefits, overall.

Sincerely,

Rose Dailey