

February 2, 2024

The Honorable Luke Clippinger  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT of HB301** – Correctional Services – Diminution of a Term of Confinement – First-Degree Rape and First Degree Sexual Offense (Pava Marie LaPere Act)

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Committee Members,

I am writing to express my unyielding support for HB301 – Correctional Services – Diminution Credits – Pava Marie LaPere Act. This bill will prevent violent offenders with the opportunity to destroy lives, simply put it will offer the citizens of Maryland a safer environment, knowing violent criminals will serve out their full sentence.

I am the aunt of Pava Marie LaPere, who was murdered by a violent sexual offender, Jason Billingsley, who was released from prison early. Had Jason Billingsley served his entire prison sentence my niece would not have met her fate at his hands in September of 2023. My family would not be suffering the way we are and we would still have faith that our justice system protects us from known criminals. Pava Marie's murder was completely avoidable and it is extremely hard to come to terms with this fact. We know our prison system is penal and not reforming; as a result, no violent criminals, especially sexual predators, should ever be released without serving the entire sentence. Yet here we are, and I implore you to support HB301.

Pava Marie LaPere put her heart and soul into developing opportunities for all people regardless of gender or race. She was a young entrepreneur who strived to create an inclusive environment through hiring and networking, and because of this her legacy will live on. However, she is not here to do what she started and it is because of Jason Billingsley and the legal loophole that let the violent rapist back on to the streets. The actions of Billingsley have put a hole in the Baltimore Entrepreneur community along with devastating her family and friends who must go on without her. All who knew Pava feel her loss, she was a true champion for the city of Baltimore, who believed small business would make a huge impact on the city and surrounding communities. All who knew Pava also are aware how the legal system let us all down by letting Billingsley back into the general population without completing his entire penal sentence.

I support this piece of legislation HB301 – Correctional Services – Diminution Credits – Pava Marie LaPere Act, and look forward to continuing conversation on this important topic. I thank you for your consideration as Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, as well Delegate Embry for sponsoring this important piece of legislation. I want to thank State's Attorney Bates for bringing this bill to the Delegate for introduction and consideration. I also want to thank the distinguished members of this Committee for considering the advancement of House Bill 301 this legislative session, to ensure no other family and community endures such a loss based on this legal loophole.

Sincerely,



Jane Marchwinski Garcia  
Grieving Aunt of Pava Marie LaPere  
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