

March 5, 2024

Dear Chairman Luke Clippinger and Esteemed Delegates,

**Oral and Written Testimony / Correctional Ombudsman Act
HB 0297 Delegate Davis SB00134 Senator Helttleman
Please vote "Favorable"**

Thank you Delegate Davis for hearing my testimony supporting House Bill 0297 The Correctional Ombudsman Bill.

I am Dr. Carmen Johnson and a resident in the State of Maryland. I know this bill is necessary because I am also an impacted person.

To outline the importance of establishing a Correctional Ombudsman Unit. Its primary objectives include but not limited to as follows:

- Investigating, reviewing, and assessing administrative actions by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, as well as issues concerning individuals in their custody.
- Referring cases for potential criminal charges or disciplinary action as necessary.
- Ensuring the confidentiality of communications with the Ombudsman to protect sensitive information. Forming a Correctional Ombudsman Advisory Board to guide and support the unit's operations. Safeguarding Department employees from reprisals for disclosing information to the Unit. Mandating the Unit to perform specific functions aimed at enhancing oversight and accountability within the correctional system.

This initiative aims to promote transparency, fairness, and justice within the correctional system, reflecting our commitment to the rights and well-being of individuals under state custody.

Please vote favorable to the Correctional Ombudsman Bill HB0297.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carmen Johnson

Founder of Helping Ourselves to Transform
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