

Statement of Testimony on HB 835

William H Tewelow

If this bill passes it will encode cruelty into the law towards all victims and their loved ones for the remainder of their lives. The fact that the House passed it is a travesty. It once again falls to the Senate to be the wiser.

Foundationally, the basis of this bill is rooted in a mistrust of the existing legal system. The convicted felon is incarcerated due to a trial (in most cases), testimony, expert witnesses, specialists, and the whole litany of resources at the court's discretion with defense attorneys, prosecutors, a judge and jury (unless waived); and then the incarcerated felon has multiple chances post-conviction for appeals. All of those are in place to ensure that the conviction was not unjust or wrongly convicted. And yet, taking all that into account, this bill overlooks the justice system to once more, and up to three times more, overturn the decision of the jury, the judge, and all the appeals. It undermines the legal system and the law.

A felon is behind bars because a crime was committed worthy of the lengthy sentence and crimes have victims and those victims are part of a social network. The victim and those in their social network must put their lives back together again after the crime and the trials, and in the cases of rape and murder, the scars never heal. The best that can be hoped for is a quiet balance in the soul learning to cope with the trauma. This bill is a heinous approval for recommitting the crimes. This bill is a criminal act.

Every time a letter comes from the state prison system or from the state attorney with the name(s) of the felons who committed the crime(s), just seeing that name and the associated evil the person committed ruptures open the pain and suffering. At the very least, this is just one more time that the convicted felon(s) gets to torture the innocent victims and their family. How dare the Congressmen and Congresswomen of this state think this is a good idea.

Moreso, this bill assumes that victims are static wards of the state, as if the victims have no right to try to rebuild their lives and move on. Some, in fact, many, may move out of the

state, and even out of the country, and might not be informed of this appeal attempt, and wretched as it is to have to endure the trauma again, in order to stand for justice and support their loved ones they will want to respond. Not doing so could be misinterpreted as not caring about it any longer, but that would not be the case at all. Being offered the opportunity to attend is burdensome, financially, emotionally, and takes time. These impact the victim's current life 20+ years later. How dare the state do that.

Because of this heinous criminal bill, a person at a new job having moved on, rebuilding their lives, and hiding their scars are now faced with having to tell their employer that they need to take off for work to attend a hearing and then having to relive it. That person's emotional state is potentially wrecked for weeks or longer. This is a travesty that is wholly avoidable. The Congressman and Congresswomen of this state are entrusted to protect the citizens of Maryland. This bill attacks its own citizens. It is a terrible bill.

This bill also does not take into account that some crimes are perpetrated by several criminals and each of those felons are eligible under this bill to request an appeal further torturing the victim and their loved ones. Again, this is wholly avoidable if Congress looks out for the best interests of its citizens.

This will only pass if malice prevails over decency and the House is consumed with cruelty for its citizens. No one is so adamant to release convicted felons back on the street to endanger society unless there is something to gain. So, who is behind something so sinister as this bill? Who is being paid? This is a danger to us all.

I entreat you to show the citizens of Maryland that you are responsible leaders and that you have compassion for the victims who have already suffered endlessly. Reject this bill for the damage it will inflict. Protect the residents of this state, especially the ones who suffer the most.

Respectfully,

W. H. Tewelow