

## **Testimony in Support of SB 702**

**Dakim Mason**

Members of the Committee,

My name is Dakim Mason, and I served 26 years in the Maryland prison system. During that time, I was placed in restorative housing on numerous occasions. Never once was it helpful. The conditions and the complete lack of human interaction are enough to drive a person insane.

Since my release, I continue to suffer from the long-term effects of solitary confinement. I find myself withdrawn from society, self-isolating, and struggling to engage with others. After years of being alone, talking to myself became a pastime—a coping mechanism that has followed me into my life outside. Solitary confinement does nothing to rehabilitate. It breaks people.

On top of that, Maryland prisons provide no opportunities for adult education beyond a GED. After 26 years inside, I was released with little to no reentry skills. In fact, my own sister had to sign me up to testify today because I didn't know how. Prison should be a place where people learn and grow from their mistakes. Instead, we are locked down for years with no programming, no preparation for life outside, and no real path to change.

I urge you to support SB 702. End the use of solitary confinement and invest in real rehabilitation. Thank you.