

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify and thank you, Delegate Valentine, for sponsoring this bill. My name is Jamel Freeman and I am in favorable support of House Bill 0022, and I speak on behalf of incarcerated individuals with peer lived experience.

The regulations under the current law, for release from division of correction, have distinction but lack key components to achieve success in reducing recidivism, devising plans to change outcomes, and promote healthy but also positive behavioral changes. One of the current regulations clearly states, “parolees must be allowed, in the discretion of MPC, to return to their homes, or to go elsewhere, upon such terms and conditions as MPC prescribes; and gradual release may be completed through a community-based treatment facility (i.e., halfway house)”. “MPC may require such placement as a step in the release process”, per (Assembly, 2025 pg.2). The politics of incarcerated individual needs are a proportionate disempowered group within the public. There is a degree of priority and preeminence on the mind that we must pay attention to. We need not talk about their behaviors first before their patterns. A incarcerated individual’s patterns must be considered first, because some problems are results of thinking patterns and not until the thinking patterns are changed, then they will keep producing the same results. Sometimes the problem is not the problem. The problems are the patterns and until they change their pattern of thinking then they will not stop producing the problem. Of, the twenty-three counties and Baltimore City, Department of Corrections facilities are in only six districts. The data captured in this newly proposed legislation bill will provide a better understanding of the level of services necessary in all twenty-four districts. Current regulations also provide unrealistic solutions for housing options following incarceration. Incarcerated individuals, returning home or to environments where there is lack in structural living day-to-day and negative influences, encouraging harmful behaviors would contribute to re-incarceration. An in-depth knowledge of the social and cultural environment that these incarcerated individuals

are released into is essential to identifying the range of interventions needed. These interventions would aid with obtaining employment, pinpointing stable accommodations, access to mental health and substance abuse resources, receiving help from reentry programs, job training, and education would help these individuals collect skills. Incorporating, data-driven approaches, person-centered care, and collaboration with community – based services tracks effectiveness. House Bill 22 promotes the inherent dignity and worth of every individual by addressing social needs, mental health needs, and physical needs. If the pattern is not changed, then the pattern will continue to produce problems. As a future licensed social worker with lived experience in this area, this bill has the potential to focus on the humanity of a person's needs without directly stating it. I have seen firsthand the importance of changing one's mindset in a pristine environment, the critical role of case management intervention, and the need for a healthy home plan. This bill aligns with these principles and has the potential to reduce recidivism rates and improve community outcomes. I respectfully request the Judiciary Committee to support and pass House Bill 0022. Thank you all for your time and attention to this matter and for allowing me to share my experience, strength, and hope.

Jamel Freeman

References:

- Assembly, M. (2025). HB 22 department of legislative services analysis (pp. 1-4). <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Legislation/Details/hb0022>.
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