

## **Testimony in Support of HB0337:**

Greetings, esteemed members of the committee. My name is Lisa Geraghty, and I'm writing to you as a board member of the Racetrack Chaplaincy of Maryland. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to speak on behalf of an organization that has played a crucial role in my life, and in the lives of so many others in our community.

I would like to take a moment to speak directly to the impact that Pastor Ron has had on me personally, and why I strongly believe that the work of the Racetrack Chaplaincy is essential for the well-being of people who often face unique challenges. Pastor Ron is a truly remarkable and compassionate individual. He is a kind, understanding, and encouraging chaplain who has been a source of light during some of the darkest times in my life.

A few months ago, I went through a traumatic event, and during that incredibly difficult time, Pastor Ron reached out to me. His care, support, and wisdom helped me tremendously as I navigated through that period. Not only did he provide me with immediate comfort, but he has continued to check in with me over the following months, offering encouragement and reminding me that I am not alone. Every time I meet with him, I feel uplifted and inspired. Pastor Ron's own life story—how he has faced and overcome significant hardships with grace—serves as a powerful example to all of us. His resilience is truly inspiring, and it's something he shares with those he serves.

For many of us who work on the backstretch, our schedules make it difficult to participate in a traditional church community. We miss the fellowship and support that others may find in their local congregations because we are working on Sundays. The Racetrack Chaplaincy has been a lifeline for many of us, offering a space for spiritual growth, community, and emotional support, especially when it feels like we are disconnected from the world around us.

Pastor Ron and the entire Chaplaincy team have provided us with a sense of belonging, and I know from personal experience how much that means. I truly believe that expanding the services of the Racetrack Chaplaincy would create an even greater positive impact, not just for me, but for many people who are experiencing mental, emotional, and spiritual hardships. This is a community that needs this support, and with your help, we can continue to grow and serve even more individuals in need.

I ask that you please support HB0337 and vote in favor of this critical funding. The lives that this grant will help improve are immeasurable. Your vote has the potential to provide healing, hope, and strength to those who need it most.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lisa Geraghty