



# MARIAN HOUSE

Women Moving from Dependence to Independence

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 89

February 9, 2026

**Marian House strongly supports SB 89: Election Law – Incarcerated Individuals – Voter Hotline and Voter Eligibility (Voting Rights for All Act)**, establishing a toll-free voter hotline for incarcerated individuals and altering the circumstances in which incarcerated individuals are able to vote. This hotline will provide a channel for incarcerated individuals to receive voting information, request election materials, report voting violations, and broaden access to voting. If enacted, this bill will strengthen our communities and promote rehabilitation within Maryland's prison systems.

**Marian House is a holistic community that provides women and their children with housing and comprehensive, wrap-around support services. Marian House provides a safe, sober, and loving environment that challenges women to respect and love themselves, confront emotional and socioeconomic barriers, and transition to stable, independent lives.**

95% of the US incarcerated population are released and return to their respective communities<sup>1</sup> The reunification these individuals experience is often difficult as they have become physically and cognitively distance from their communities and lives before incarceration. The ability to vote mitigates the disconnect that inmates have from their communities. With the provision of election materials and access to voting, people who are experiencing incarceration are able to inform and involve themselves in public matters and stay up to date on the changes and attitudes within their communities and homes, narrowing their cognitive distance.

While those experiencing incarceration are physically separated from society, they are still a large part of our society. In Maryland the incarcerated population make up 32,000 voices, family members, community participants, and potential votes<sup>2</sup>. For many of these 32,000 individuals, voting means taking part in community action, voting in favor of their child's best interest, and making a difference in the society they are working to rejoin. While voting can be something that is easy to overlook, for individuals serving a prison sentence, voting is an essential part of staying connected to family, community, and establishing a positive civic identity<sup>3</sup>.

**Marian House is eager to support the Voting Rights for All Act. For over forty-three years, Marian House has been serving women reentering the community from Maryland's carceral system, many of whom spent years to decades incarcerated. SB 89 provides representation to a population often diminished by society, creating an opportunity for them to participate and support the communities they are preparing to rejoin.**

Thank you for your consideration,

  
Rebecca Perry  
Interim Chief Executive Officer / Chief Operating Officer

RP/np

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<sup>1</sup> *Statistics*. (2021). Reentry Essential, Inc. <https://reentryessentials.org/pages/statistics>

<sup>2</sup> Initiative, P. P. (n.d.). *Maryland profile*. Maryland profile | Prison Policy Initiative. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/MD.html>

<sup>3</sup> Miller, B., & Spillane, J. (2012). Civil death: An examination of ex-felon disenfranchisement and reintegration. *Punishment & Society*, 14, 402–428. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474512452513>; Shineman, V. (2020). Restoring voting rights: Evidence that reversing felony disenfranchisement increases political efficacy. *Policy Studies*, 41(2-3), 131-150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2019.1694655>; Uggen et al. (2013)