



The Maryland Office of the Correctional Ombudsman
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TO: Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair and Members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee

FROM: Yvonne Briley-Wilson, Esquire, Maryland Correctional Ombudsman
The Maryland Office of the Correctional Ombudsman

DATE: February 3, 2026

REGARDING: SUPPORT – HB22 Correctional Services – Incarcerated Individuals – Identification Cards and Driver’s Licenses

Good afternoon, Chair Wells, Vice-Chair Kerr and committee members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB22.

I am Yvonne Briley-Wilson, Esquire, the Maryland Correctional Ombudsman. I am here this afternoon testifying on behalf of the Maryland Office of the Correctional Ombudsman (OCO) in support of HB22 Correctional Services – Incarcerated Individuals – Identification Cards and Driver’s Licenses. As the agency that provides oversight to the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), it is the mission of the Office of the Correctional Ombudsman to function in transparency, accountability, and impartiality, ensuring that incarcerated adults and detained and/or adjudicated youth are treated fairly, with dignity, humanity and respect. OCO emphasizes the importance of collaboration among the agencies we oversee, the individuals in their care, and the staff working within them. We also value the strength of our community partnerships and prioritize the reduction of recidivism and the safety of all Marylanders.

OCO supports HB22 because it aligns with the mission of OCO and supports the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals back into the community. Rehabilitation and preparation to re-enter the community should and does start from the point an incarcerated individual enters the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). HB22 seeks to ensure that from the paperwork and identification perspective, incarcerated individuals are prepared to reenter society with an advantage versus a disadvantage.

Over the last year and a half, OCO has consistently received inquiries/complaints from incarcerated individuals in every facility we have entered about not being prepared to re-enter

the community due to a lack of proper documentation. Individuals who do not have the proper documentation will have a more difficult time obtaining employment, housing, and the necessary things to reduce the likelihood of their recidivism.

If you have not had the opportunity to do so, please participate in the DPSCS's reentry stimulation. I call the stimulation Re-entry Monopoly because it demonstrates the challenges to re-entry every II faces. One of the most difficult challenges can be not having proper identification because without it, IIs will struggle to begin the process of successful adjustment to their reentry. When IIs are required to wait until in the community to obtain their identification, unless they have strong family and community support it reduces their success in obtaining them due to lack of resources, sometimes a lack of a proper address, and sometimes a lack of understanding about the process for obtaining their identification.

OCO urges your support of HB22 to ensure that incarcerated individuals returning to the community have at least one layer of support already in place when they leave from behind the walls.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Office of the Correctional Ombudsman's support of HB22. I welcome any questions you may have at this time.