

## TESTIMONY ON HB 52- VOTING RIGHTS FOR ALL ACT

Government, Labor and Elections

February 11, 2026

**FAVORABLE**

Submitted by: **Magdalena Tsiongas, MPH**

Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr and members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee:

**I, Magdalena Tsiongas, am testifying in support of HB 52, the Voting Rights for All Act.** I am submitting this testimony as the family member of an incarcerated person in a Maryland prison, John.

John has spent 19 years incarcerated, since he was 19 years old. He has never had the ability to vote, and unless the law changes, he never will. Disenfranchisement of people incarcerated with a felony sends a very clear message to those in prison. That their voices do not matter to elected officials. That their experiences do not matter, and that no one is listening to what is happening to them behind those prison walls.

Through my work as convenor of the MD Second Look Coalition, I have been overwhelmed with the engagement from incarcerated people looking to be involved in the legislative process. We are in touch with lifers groups and individuals at every prison in MD, who are engaged in legislative work. Hundreds of men incarcerated at North Branch Correctional Institution signed a petition in support of the Second Look Act. Make no mistake that these individuals are itching for an opportunity to be involved in the process where decisions are being made each day about their lives and their freedom.

It should come as no surprise, that in MD, 72% of the incarcerated population is Black, while only 30% of the general population is. This inevitably means the disenfranchisement of Black people specifically and intentionally.

The right to vote should not be a negotiable one. Our neighbors in the District of Columbia can serve as a model to us, as the Restore the Vote Amendment Act allows District residents to vote while incarcerated whether in the DC Department of Corrections or the federal Bureau of Prisons.

HB 52 would ensure that the right to vote is a right afforded to everyone in practice. It would allow incarcerated people the ability to have their voices heard in elections, elections that often directly impact the quality of their life and their freedom.

I urge you for a **favorable report** on HB 52.

Thank you.