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Children, Youth, and Families

Senate Chair, Legislative Ethics



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony for Senate Bill 61**  
**Division of Correction – Volunteer Services Program**  
**Before the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee**  
**April 2, 2025**

Good afternoon Chair Wells, members of the committee.

The Division of Corrections (“Division”) currently provides some opportunities for volunteers to support incarcerated individuals through programs such as Lived Experiences. Senate Bill 61 (“SB 61”) creates a formal public mechanism for formerly incarcerated individuals and other innovative community programs to get behind the walls for a broader array of support services.

Under this bill, the Division of Corrections is tasked with developing a protocol for registering individual volunteers and organizations, including those led by formerly incarcerated individuals, to access detention facilities to provide release preparation programming. Although the original bill required the list of registered volunteers to be made public, conversations with both the Division and the organizations who anticipate registering through this protocol led to an amendment allowing formerly incarcerated individuals to maintain public anonymity.

Volunteers and organizations who register through this protocol will be required to submit a schedule for accessing Division facilities, which may only be denied if it interferes with the facilities’ normal operations.

Although the House and Senate have already passed substantially similar versions of this bill, the exact language differs slightly.

Codifying these peer and volunteer support programs is vital to their longevity and ability to provide the services that prepare incarcerated individuals to re-enter broader society. For these reasons, I urge the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 61.