

**House Bill 22 (Correctional Services – Incarcerated Individuals – Identification Cards and Driver’s Licenses)
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
Hearing Date: February 5, 2026**

Position: FAVORABLE with Amendment

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

I, Serena Lao, am submitting this testimony in support of HB 22, with an amendment. My loved one was incarcerated for 37 years in Maryland prisons for a crime committed at the age of 16.

Although my loved one had a driver’s license prior to his incarceration in 1988, this important form of ID was not kept by the state. 37 years later, upon his release, he was given a temporary photo ID with an expiration date set for a month and a half after his release date. The Motor Vehicle Administration would not accept this ID, nor would the Social Security Administration. As one of his main supporters, I have accompanied him to the MVA and SSA on numerous occasions to try and make sure he can get his administrative documents in order. I am lucky to have the flexibility to do that, but many others do not, and this bill would ease the strain on support systems upon an incarcerated individual’s release.

I urge you to **amend the bill to change the timeline from “6 months before the anticipated release from confinement...” to ONE YEAR.** There are many potential points for delay in the process of gathering forms and working within the system, as well as with other systems. Thus, beginning this process earlier would help to ensure that incarcerated individuals have their necessary documents upon release.

This bill is an important piece of legislation that would significantly help with the reentry process and reduce recidivism. Having a photo ID, driver’s license, and/or social security card is the bare minimum for an incarcerated individual to find employment, get a car, and several other basic endeavors to start their lives out here. Returning citizens who have served lengthy sentences are making meaningful impact in our communities. Passing this bill would prevent unnecessary delays for many of these individuals who have been eagerly preparing themselves during incarceration to make positive contributions to society.

Thank you for reading, and I urge you to vote **favorably with amendments** on **HB 22.**

Sincerely,



Serena Lao
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