



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 241

### Election Law – Individuals Released From State Correctional Facilities – Automatic Restoration of Voter Registration

**TO:** Chair and Members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

**FROM:** Marsha Briley-Savage, Reentry Coordinator, Anne Arundel County Government

**DATE:** April 1, 2026

**POSITION:** SUPPORT

My name is Marsha Briley-Savagem, and I submit this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 241**, which would remove unnecessary barriers to voter registration for eligible individuals released from Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) facilities.

#### Background and Professional Experience

My commitment to civic engagement for justice-impacted individuals began on February 9, 2016, when the Maryland General Assembly overrode the veto of SB 340/HB 980, restoring voting rights to more than 40,000 Marylanders. At that time, I served as Director of Reentry Services for DPSCS.

Understanding that legislation is only effective if properly implemented, I became the first—and to my knowledge, the only—official to ensure that all Transition Specialists statewide were trained by the Maryland State Board of Elections. I further required that the Board of Elections be present at all DPSCS Reentry Fairs so that individuals within 90 days of release could prepare to return to their communities as fully participating citizens.

#### The Reality of Current Barriers

Today, as Reentry Coordinator for Anne Arundel County Government detention facilities, I continue to see systemic barriers that prevent eligible voters from accessing voter registration:

- **The Digital Desert:** Correctional facilities are highly regulated environments. Internet access is unavailable, and neither staff nor incarcerated individuals may possess cell phones—the primary tools required for modern voter registration.
- **Institutional Resistance:** Case managers and facility staff are often overburdened and may view voter engagement efforts as an additional task rather than a core reentry responsibility.
- **Inconsistent Access:** In 2025, through collaboration with the Board of Elections and the Expand the Ballot initiative, we successfully engaged more than 100 individuals at the Ordnance Road Correctional Center. However, similar efforts at the Jennifer Road Detention Center were unsuccessful due to these structural barriers.

Access to the ballot should not depend on the persistence of individual advocates or the discretion of facility staff.



**SB 241 directly addresses these challenges** by establishing a secure, uniform, and automated process to restore voter registration for eligible individuals upon release from DPSCS facilities.

By requiring the electronic transfer of release data from DPSCS to the State Board of Elections, SB 241:

- Eliminates the need for internet access or mobile devices within facilities;
- Reduces the administrative burden placed on facility staff;
- Ensures consistent restoration of voter registration statewide, regardless of facility location.

Maryland has made significant progress in restoring voting rights, but without reliable systems in place, those rights remain vulnerable to administrative failure. SB 241 institutionalizes best practices, removes preventable barriers, and ensures that returning citizens are recognized as full participants in our democracy.

I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report on SB 241**.

This bill also aligns with the mission of Out For Justice and its partners to ensure justice-impacted individuals are treated with dignity and are empowered to fully participate in civic life and democracy.