

TO:

Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair

Delegate Debra Davis, Vice Chair

Members of the *House Judiciary Committee*:

FROM:

Anthony Wazir Muhammad

We Our Us, Community Engagement/Re-Entry Specialist

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RE: HOUSE BILL 108

Division of Correction - Release Preparation Program

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

February 3, 2026

Greetings,

I respectfully submit this written testimony for the official record to express my full **SUPPORT** for *House Bill 101*.

I am a returning citizen and justice impacted individual. At the age of 15, I was arrested for two homicide charges in Baltimore City. Ultimately, I was convicted and sentenced to life plus a consecutive 20-years in prison. I served 29-years of incarceration before I was released under the *Maryland Juvenile Restoration Act (JRA)* in 2022.

I am one of many JRA releases who have successfully reintegrated back into society, and who collectively share a less than 4% recidivism rate. Both individually and collectively, many of the JRA releases, and other returning citizens as well, are now doing phenomenal work in the community, especially in the area of providing re-entry services and peer support to returning citizens.

I serve as a Community Engagement/Re-Entry Specialist with *We Our Us*, a community-based organization that provides a wide variety of resources and services to the community. Specifically, my assignment is community violence intervention, and providing peer support to returning citizens to connects them with reentry services.

The Secretary of the Maryland Department of Public Safety & Correctional Services, Ms. Carolyn J. Scruggs, has established a “*Lived Experience Committee*” (LEC), which consist of returning citizens and justice impacted individual who are now productive members of society. The LEC provides limited opportunities for returning citizens to reenter Maryland’s Division of Correction (DOC) to speak to inmates and provide re-entry services and peer support.

The LEC is operated by the current DPSCS Director of Re-Entry Services, Ms. Ellen Rappaport. Although I am not a direct member of the LEC, on behalf of *We Our Us*, I have collaborated with LEC members, and DPSCS Re-Entry Fairs, to provide reentry services.

Essentially, the goal of House Bill 108 is to codify the LEC into law, and provide the necessary funding to create an official program that allows returning citizens and justice impacted individuals to reenter Maryland's DOC -under appropriate circumstances- to provide critical reentry services and peer support – without the current offense restrictions and/or supervision limitations.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on *House Bill 108*. Thank you for your time and consideration of this legislation.