

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is Geoff Eldridge, I am a resident of St. Mary's County, and I am writing to urge you to move SB0066, known as Jamari's Law, forward with a favorable recommendation.

I knew Jamari Duckett. He attended Great Mills High School with my eldest daughter, and worked at a local dining establishment I frequented. Jamari was an amazing individual whose light shined brightly—an individual who would have gone out into the world and made it a better place than he already had. Yet, his life was snuffed out prematurely.

Another devastating blow came to all who knew Jamari, when we were denied justice due to the inexplicably lenient laws of this state with respect to manslaughter by vehicle.

Jamari's Law is thoughtful and measured legislation that if passed gives the judiciary discretion to make the sentence imposed fit the circumstances of the case at hand. This law merely expands the range of the sentence that can be imposed upon an individual who commits the crime of manslaughter by vehicle.

This law is the correct response to a tragic loss of a young man who still had much to give the world. Jamari's father, John, and our community could have authored a law that sought retribution by demanding longer sentences, and that factors such as speed, and blood alcohol content be weighed in sentencing. Instead, we have chosen this measured approach that allows for a longer sentence to be imposed when circumstances demand such in the pursuit of justice.

No amount of lauding Jamari can do the light that shone from Jamari justice. No father, family member, friend or classmate should experience the injustice our community has endured. This law should be the lasting change to the world, Jamari Duckett was denied the opportunity to make during his life. I call upon this committee to release Jamari's Law to the General Assembly with a favorable recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

Geoffrey T. Eldridge
Piney Point, Maryland