

Hearing Date: Wednesday, 2/4/26 at 11:00 AM
Paul Holmes
Silver Spring, MD 20901

**Testimony on SB268 – Favorable
Correctional Services – Restrictive Housing – Individuals with
Developmental or Intellectual Disabilities**

To: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Paul Holmes

My name is Paul Holmes. I live in District 19, Silver Spring and am a member of Interfaith Action for Human Rights (IAHR), a coalition representing people of faith and allies who educate and advocate for corrections systems to abolish unnecessarily punitive practices such as solitary confinement and to instead focus on rehabilitation and successful reentry of our citizens. I **strongly support SB268, Correctional Services – Restrictive Housing – Individuals with Developmental or Intellectual Disabilities Act.**

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities are uniquely vulnerable in correctional settings. They are more likely to be misunderstood, disciplined for disability-related behaviors, and placed in restrictive housing where isolation can cause severe psychological harm. For this population, prolonged solitary confinement is not correction -- it is trauma.

SB268 takes a balanced, evidence-based approach. It allows licensed mental health professionals to assess individuals for I/DD, authorizes clinical recommendations, and limits restrictive housing to no more than 15 days in a 30-day period, with narrow exceptions for extremely serious acts. Importantly, this bill does not eliminate discipline, compromise safety, or interfere with emergency response. It simply ensures that less harmful alternatives are used whenever possible.

Medical and human rights experts agree that isolation worsens mental health and increases the risk of long-term harm, especially for people with cognitive disabilities. SB268 protects public safety while upholding mental health standards, disability rights, and basic human dignity.

I urge you to **vote YES on SB268** and help ensure Maryland's correctional system reflects compassion, fairness, and evidence-based practices.