



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0268:

Correctional Services – Restrictive Housing – Individuals With Developmental or Intellectual Disabilities

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings and House Judiciary Committee

FROM: **Treveric Speaks**

Members of the Committee, my name is Treveric Speaks. I live in District 40, and I am here today in support of Senate Bill 268, which limits the use of restrictive housing and requires proper clinical assessment before someone is subjected to prolonged isolation. I am not here to talk about theory or best practices. I am here because I lived it.

I spent extended amounts of time in restrictive housing while I was incarcerated. Being locked in a cell alone for most of the day did not help me change my behavior or come out better on the other side. It did the opposite. It broke me down. The isolation was overwhelming. The silence was heavy. The way I was treated made me feel invisible and less than human. Day after day, I sat alone with my thoughts, my fear, and my pain, with no real support and no way to cope.

That kind of isolation takes a serious toll on your mental health. It pushed me into deep depression and caused trauma that I still carry with me today. Even after leaving restrictive housing, the damage did not just disappear. I still struggle with the mental and emotional impact of what I went through. Restrictive housing did not rehabilitate me. It harmed me. And for people with developmental or intellectual disabilities, that harm is even more severe.

There is nothing constructive about placing someone in prolonged isolation. It does not make facilities safer. It does not prepare people to return to their families or communities. It creates more pain, more anger, and more long term damage.

That is why Senate Bill 268 matters. This bill recognizes that people with disabilities need care and assessment, not isolation. Allowing clinical professionals to evaluate individuals at intake and limiting restrictive housing to no more than 15 consecutive days is a necessary safeguard, not a loophole. It is a step toward treating incarcerated people like human beings instead of problems to be locked away.

If Senate Bill 268 is passed into law, people like me will be spared the kind of prolonged isolation that leaves lasting scars. It will prevent others from going through the same pain I did and help move Maryland toward a correctional system that values mental health, dignity, and basic humanity.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 268. Thank you for your consideration.