

WRITTEN TESTIMONY: Senate Bill 66 “Jamari’s Law”

To: Maryland General Assembly
From: Jennifer Cooper, Maryland Resident (20619)
Re: Jamari’s Law, Senate Bill 66
Date: January 20, 2026

To the Maryland General Assembly:

On April 22, 2024, my cousin – Gary Alan Cooper – lost his life instantly at the intersection of Route 301 and Acton Lane in Waldorf, Maryland, due to Gross Vehicular Manslaughter at the hands of Stacy Jermaine Barksdale, a man with a *previous history of multiple driving impaired convictions*. Barksdale, who had methamphetamine, marijuana, and a .15 alcohol content in his system at the time of his lethal actions, was sentenced to 15 years with all but 12 years suspended, plus 5 years of probation upon release.

In addition to killing my cousin, Barksdale permanently injured and disabled Gary’s long-time partner, Denise Kesterson (who was driving their vehicle), who continues to endure multiple surgeries, unbearable pain, and financial hardship, not to mention the unimaginable loss of her life-long partner.

It is absurd to me that a person who has repeatedly driven under the influence, with evidentiary criminal convictions, enjoyed the privilege of continuing said criminal behavior, resulting in the DEATH of an innocent person, and will still *rejoin free society just 10 years from now*, while my cousin remains buried in the ground, his partner remains permanently disabled, and our family continues to grieve.

I imagine that Jamari Duckett’s family feels a similar weight and sense of injustice in regard to their horrifically similar loss. That is why I am in full favor of Senate Bill 66 “Jamari’s Law” which would increase the maximum penalty for vehicular manslaughter from 10 to 20 years, and 15 to 30 years for any subsequent conviction.

This action is long overdue. Please do the right thing.

Sincerely,



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