



THE LADIES OF HOPE MINISTRIES, INC.

Ending the Poverty and Incarceration of Women and Girls Globally
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Date: January 21st, 2026

RE: Letter of Support for SB 0138 / HB 0084 – The PATH Act

Dear Honorable Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

I write in strong support of SB 0138 / HB 0084 – The PATH Act (Providing Alternatives Through Healing), legislation that reflects a thoughtful, humane, and evidence-based approach to justice for justice-involved individuals.

As the Founder and CEO of The Ladies of Hope Ministries (LOHM)—a national organization dedicated to ending the poverty and incarceration of women and girls—and as someone who has personally experienced incarceration and later received a full and unconditional Presidential Pardon, I understand firsthand the transformative power of second chances rooted in healing, accountability, and opportunity.

The PATH Act represents a critical step forward by promoting fair and proportional sentencing, prioritizing rehabilitation over punishment, and advancing public safety through community-based solutions. By expanding access to trauma-informed and therapeutic alternatives, this legislation acknowledges what decades of research and lived experience have shown: healing people strengthens families, stabilizes communities, and reduces recidivism.

Through our Hope House PGC program located in Prince George's County, we provide safe, stable housing for women actively fleeing domestic violence, made possible through our partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This initiative offers permanent supportive services and up to one year of rental assistance, ensuring survivors have the stability, safety, and wraparound support needed to heal, rebuild, and transition toward long-term independence.

At LOHM, we work daily with women and families navigating the long-term impacts of incarceration. We see how untreated trauma, mental health challenges, and lack of access to supportive services perpetuate cycles of harm. The PATH Act directly addresses these realities by offering pathways that foster restoration rather than continued punishment—benefiting not only justice-involved individuals, but their children, families, and the broader community.

I also wish to express deep appreciation to Senator Shaneka Henson and Delegate Stephanie Smith for their leadership and sponsorship of this legislation. Their commitment to survivor-centered, healing-focused policy reflects a bold and compassionate vision for justice that is both smart and just.

Supporting legislation like the PATH Act affirms that accountability and compassion are not mutually exclusive—and that true public safety is achieved when we invest in people's capacity to heal and thrive.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to policies that uplift communities, strengthen families, and create lasting change.

With respect and gratitude,

Dr. Topeka K. Sam

Founder & Chief Executive Officer
The Ladies of Hope Ministries, Inc.