

January 20, 2026

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Distinguished Committee Members,

My name is Brandon Russell and I am a resident of St. Mary's County. I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 0066 - Jamari's Law, urging your committee to issue a **favorable report** on this legislation.

Jamari Duckett's young life ended too soon because of the negligence of a drunk driver in 2022. The driver was traveling at speeds of up to 91 miles per hour in a 40-mile-per-hour speed limit zone when he struck Jamari's vehicle.

Under current law, a first offense for manslaughter by vehicle carries a maximum of 10 years in prison, with subsequent offenses carrying a maximum of 15 years. This crime is considered a "non-violent" offense despite the violent effects on the lives of the Duckett family. Those convicted can be eligible for parole after serving just one-quarter of their sentence, meaning those sentenced to 10 years for a first offense could be released in as little as 2.5 years.

This bill would increase the maximum penalties to 20 years for a first offense, and 30 years for a second offense. Importantly, the bill will not create a mandatory minimum sentence. Rather, it provides judges flexibility when sentencing those found guilty of this crime.

Again, I urge a **favorable report** from your committee.

Thank you.

Brandon Russell
Leonardtown, MD