

Testimony SB0138 / HB0084

The Path Act

Sackiella Sackie

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Good afternoon, Senator Will Smith, Vice Chair Jeff Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Committee.

My name is Sackiella Sackie, and I am a resident of Hyattsville, Maryland. I am here today in strong support of the PATH Act.

I serve as the Lead Intern and Executive Assistant with Helping Ourselves to Transform, an organization rooted in trauma-informed advocacy, community healing, and justice-centered reform. I am also a sociology major at Bowie State University, preparing for advanced clinical and policy work in social services.

Through my work, I have seen something very clear: many people in our criminal legal system are not there because they are beyond help, they are there because help came too late.

I have worked with individuals carrying deep trauma, untreated mental illness, addiction, and the weight of poverty. Especially in Black and Brown communities, these realities are too often met with punishment instead of care. When the system responds without understanding, it does not create safety, it creates cycles of harm.

The PATH Act matters because it finally says what communities have known for years: accountability and healing can exist together. This bill provides trauma-informed care,

behavioral health support, and real rehabilitation—before incarceration becomes the default response.

When people receive the right support at the right time, lives change. I have seen individuals stabilize, reconnect with their families, and return to their communities with purpose instead of shame. This is not a theory. This is real—and it works.

Passing the PATH Act is about more than justice reform. It is about public health, racial equity, and fiscal responsibility. It reduces repeat system involvement, strengthens families, and makes communities safer.

Maryland has a choice: continue funding punishment; or lead with courage and invest in healing.

On behalf of survivors, families, and communities across this state, I strongly urge a favorable report on SB0138 and HB0084.

The PATH Act is not soft on accountability—it is strong on solutions. And it is the bill Maryland should pass.

Thank you.

Sackiella Sackie

Lead Intern/ Executive Assistant for Helping Ourselves To Transform