



Continuing the Missions of the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation, Inc.

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February 27, 2026

RE: FAVORABLE TO HOUSE BILL 463

Dear Chair Bartlett and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center (MCVRC) respectfully submits this letter in **support of House Bill 643**, which would prohibit incarcerated individuals serving sentences for first degree murder from earning diminution credits to reduce their term of confinement.

For the families we serve, a sentence for first degree murder represents the justice system's most serious recognition of the value of a human life taken through intentional and premeditated violence. When diminution credits substantially reduce the period of incarceration for these offenders (over 50% can now be reduced), families often experience that reduction as a reopening of trauma and a quiet erosion of the accountability that the court's sentence was meant to represent.

MCVRC works with homicide survivors across Maryland, including many whose loved ones were killed in deliberate and calculated acts of violence. These families live with lifelong loss. Their loved one does not receive a reduction in the permanence of death. Yet under current law, the individual responsible for that loss may receive reductions in confinement that were never clearly understood by victims' families at the time of sentencing.

House Bill 643 promotes transparency, certainty, and integrity in sentencing. It ensures that the punishment imposed for first degree murder reflects the seriousness of the crime and is carried out as pronounced. Equally important, the bill applies prospectively. This respects due process concerns while providing clarity moving forward for courts, correctional institutions, victims, and the public.

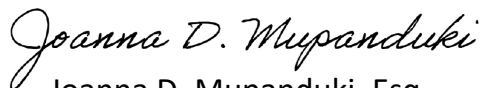
For homicide survivors, predictability in sentencing is not an abstract policy. It is emotional stability. It allows families to rebuild their lives without the recurring fear that the sentence they relied upon will be shortened in ways they never anticipated.

Nothing in our justice system can restore the life that was taken. But it can ensure that the most serious crimes are met with consequences that remain meaningful, consistent, and transparent over time.

For these reasons, MCVRC urges the Committee to issue a **favorable report on House Bill 643**.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to Maryland's crime victims and their families.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joanna D. Mupanduki".

Joanna D. Mupanduki, Esq.

Deputy Director

Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center, Inc.

