

Written Testimony for HB1347

Task Force to Study Postrelease Services and Requirements

Bri's Law

My name is Jodeci Albertson and my little sister Brianna Mae Weishaar, was brutally taken from my family. Not because of an accident, not because of health issues, but because violent repeat offenders (VROs) and gang-affiliated felons are being released back into society without proper monitoring and structure. This judicial system is relying on the hopes that these felons are rehabilitated and will rejoin the communities they once hurt or neglected and behave differently. I am not saying that these individuals should never rejoin society, Brianna was one of the most willing people to give others a second chance. I am saying that we can take a different and more effective approach in rehabilitating inmates returning to society.

This task force to study postrelease services and requirements is necessary and long overdue. Maryland needs to not only protect their communities but also help their parolees be more successful in reintegration. This is an issue that needs to be addressed, not just because my sister was murdered by recently paroled felons who should've been monitored more effectively but also because Maryland has one of the highest recidivism rates in the United States. According to Maryland's department of public safety, the three year recidivism rate in Maryland is 40.5%. This means that within 3 years after being released, almost half will be reincarcerated again. That statistic alone clearly identifies that our current approach is not effective.

Maryland has implemented their C.A.R.E.S program and has also added more reentry planning and guidance for inmates approaching their release. Then after the inmate gets released Maryland just gives them a curfew and periodic drug tests and then hopes they are capable and willing to apply what they've learned. Having some level of routine in your daily life has been proven to reduce stress, promote a feeling of self-efficacy, and create a sense of control over your environment. It is also shown through many studies that individuals with lower levels of routine in their daily life report higher levels of anxiety and depression. This stressful and emotional transition can contribute to why inmates struggle to implement the skills learned in a more structured and controlled environment. Maintaining a level of structure and routine during the transition, with active monitoring and guidance not only benefits the community but also the

parolee. Maryland needs this task force and Bri's Law to show that it cares about its law-abiding citizens as much as they care about giving felons a second chance.