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Appropriations Committee

Public Safety and
Administration Subcommittee



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Testimony in Support of House Bill 1275 Correctional Services - Inmate Release (Suzanne Jones Act)

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary & Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for hearing HB 1275 - This bill requires the Division of Correction (DOC), after an inmate is released from confinement in a State correctional facility, to transport the inmate from the correctional facility to the jurisdiction of the inmate's (1) address that is listed on a REAL ID Act compliant identification (ID) card or driver's license; (2) address that was recorded by the correctional facility at the time the inmate entered the correctional facility; or (3) last known residence before incarceration, as determined by the decennial census. The Division of Parole and Probation (DPP) must supervise any required probation, parole, or mandatory supervision of the inmate in that jurisdiction.

In October of 2017, Suzanne Jones, a young woman from our local community, was brutally murdered by Jack Lee Phillips, an individual who had been released from one of the state correctional facilities located just a few miles south of our City. Mr. Phillips had no ties to our community prior to his release, however was released under his "home plan" into the City of Hagerstown.

From 2015-2018, there were 1,714 inmates released into Washington County from the 3 State Correctional Facilities located within our County. Of which, 1,204 were individuals whose crimes originated outside of Washington County. That translates into 70% of the inmates released into Washington County were not from our community originally.

Without the proper support system in place, a disservice is being done to both the released inmates within our state and to our local communities. And while we encourage and support the reentry of released inmates back into society, the rural communities where a majority of the correctional institutes are located simply cannot handle this population influx. If we are not providing the services & support to those being reentered into our society there is a far greater likelihood that recidivism will occur. And when that occurs we have failed not only our communities but also the individual being integrated back into society.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully ask for a Favorable report on HB 1275.