



Charles County Government

CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., *President*
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Mark Belton
County Administrator

February 26, 2021

Committee: Judiciary

Testimony on: HB1072 – Charles County – Community Service and Pretrial Release Programs

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 2, 2021

Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chairwoman Atterbeary, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

As the Commissioner President in Charles County, I respectfully request favorable action on HB1072, titled Charles County – Community Service and Pretrial Release Programs.

The Charles County Commissioners were informed by our Sheriff's Office that Maryland Parole and Probation recently ceased to provide pretrial services in Charles County. Recognizing the critical role of pretrial services in our community, we formally request the necessary legislation to administer a pretrial release program.

We believe that HB1072 promotes fair and equal treatment of all persons accused of criminal offenses, and ensures their access to liberty and due process is not unjustly predicated on their financial means. We do not believe it is beneficial to our community for persons who otherwise qualify for pretrial release to stay in our detention center awaiting their day in court, while others charged with the same offense but who are able to pay, go free. This bill will give us the ability to establish a program to assess eligibility for release, supervise those that are eligible, and make recommendations to the court regarding services needed to ensure the safety of the community.

Unnecessary detention before trial not only results in unnecessary jail costs, but it also deprives the person charged of an opportunity to be productive while awaiting case disposition. HB1072 will be a valuable resource for making significant improvements in criminal justice within Charles County.

Please provide a favorable report on HB1072. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

/s/

Letter Identifier (Re: Line)

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Date

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.

Charles County Commissioner President