

Bill No: HB 131

Title: **Correctional Services – Step–Down Programs – Cause of Action**

Committee: Judiciary

Hearing Date: January 27, 2021

Position: SUPPORT

I am writing to ask your support for [HB 131](#) in order to better prepare our incarcerated citizens to transition successfully back to the community, keeping their families and communities safe and reducing the recidivism that occurs when people who have been imprisoned away from society for years – even decades – have no idea how to navigate the society to which they have suddenly been placed.

I am writing this with the passion of a Marylander whose son spent time behind bars and who corresponds regularly with several incarcerated individuals who have spent months in “solitary confinement” (or “restrictive housing as it is often called”) and have no choice except to return to old habits, that is bad habits, when they get out because they have not been taught about or prepared for anything else.

This could have been my son’s story except that our family rallied around him. Not all ex-prisoners are as lucky .

I belong to the Interfaith Alliance for Human Rights as well as several other Criminal Justice organizations. Our friend, Delegate Jazz Lewis (D. Prince George County), is sponsoring [HB 131](#) which mandates that the Department of Correctional Services provide transitional services to incarcerated people six months prior to their release.

The bill would require that the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) introduces a “step-down” program that gradually increases out of cell time and group interaction to people in restrictive housing. The bill also mandates that the step-down program be individualized to meet the needs of the incarcerated person and “involve a coordinated, multidisciplinary treatment team approach.”

The background for this legislation is the fact that over the last 5 years DPSCS has released annually anywhere from 250 to 300 people directly from restrictive housing to the community. We have always felt that releasing people directly from restrictive housing to the community is a threat to public safety and undermines the chances of incarcerated people to reenter the community successfully.

I hope you will support this measure.

Yours truly,

Lucy Y Steinitz

Lucy. Y. Steinitz cell: +1-443-410-2008
9920 Gardiner Ave., Silver Spring, Md. 20902