

Bill No: **HB0003**

Title: Parole Reform

Committee: Judiciary/Judicial Proceedings

Hearing Date: January 18, 2021

Position: SUPPORT

I am a wife of incarcerated individual that's sentenced to life imprisonment with the possibility of parole. I whole heartily believe that the Governor should not play a role in the parole process in Maryland. My desire is that you support this bill.

I support this bill because it would allow inmates a fair and second chance at life. Most of the inmates in their 50's, 60's, and 70's has been rehabilitated. With that said, many of us (families) has missed countless birthdays, holidays, traveling. I've been knowing my husband for about 23 years, and we been married for almost 4 years. We would like the opportunity to make new memories with our loved ones. Because all the memories we all have is prison memories!

The Governor's refusal to grant parole to many lifers including my husband. The Maryland Parole Commission, vote unanimous for my husband to be parole. He had not had any infractions in almost 30 years. My husband (Dameron Smallwood) and other model inmates has shown significant rehabilitation.

Maryland is one of only three states that includes the Governor in its decisions to grant parole. The politicization of the process for releasing rehabilitated incarcerated individuals has kept our family members in prison longer than they deserve. My husband been in prison since he 15 years old and now he's 51 years old. So many intimates are beyond the time being incarcerated.

The process gives the Governor far too much power in making these decisions; it leaves the Maryland Parole Commission essentially powerless. From Governor Glendening's declaration that "life means life" in 1994 to Governor Hogan's refusal to parole lifers approved by the Maryland Parole Commission today, denying parole to lifers has been based on the false and offensive narrative that our family members cannot be rehabilitated. This is untrue and leaves our incarcerated loved ones and our families feeling hopeless and incomplete.

I am Maryland resident, small business owner, and a taxpaying constituents of the members of this Judicial Proceedings Committee. The person I love is stuck in this immobile, unjust system.

My husband caught COVID, and I believe he almost died, because they to rush him to University of Maryland hospital where they worked on him to he was stable. I said to Kunle Adeyemo that I don't want to see my husband died in prison, because the carelessness of vendors and your workers. The workers at JCI has spread the virus rapidly in the prison.

These juveniles and lifers do not deserve to die in prison. When it's time die, I prefer him surrounding by family, not correctional officers or prison doctors and nurses.

Please have compassion when it's time to vote on this bill. I urge with everything within me to past this bill. Make God bless you and United States of America.

Thank you,

Cheryl Smallwood