

## **Support HB 0003 - Parole for Eligible Inmates Serving Life Sentences**

My name is Edward Sabin. I'm part of the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) and Maryland CURE. I am a retired state employee and have been a volunteer at Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI) for over 20 years. In that time I've come to know inmates who are fine people, who have a positive outlook, and who improve the prison environment for themselves and for others. Some are serving parole eligible life sentences and have been recommended for parole several times by the Maryland Parole Commission. But they remain in prison due to the reluctance of recent governors to sign off on their parole, the last step in the parole process in this state and two other U.S. states.

Attached are photos of two groups of parole eligible lifers serving sentences in JCI. Both photos are arranged from high to low in the number of years served. The longest serving inmates, pictured in the top row of the photos, range in age from 83 years to 66 years old as of last year. The second photo, also arranged from high to low in the number of years served, shows parole eligible lifers convicted for crimes committed while juveniles.

Several Maryland prisons have active lifers' groups including the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW); the Maryland Correctional Institution-Jessup (MCIJ); and JCI. I've been invited to speak (and listen) to the MCIJ lifers' group. Last year I received a warm welcome from a group of 30 or so men crowded into a small classroom. Prior to COVID 19, they met every Friday evening and would appreciate outside guests coming in. When the pandemic is over, they would appreciate visits from members of the Judiciary Committee. They don't want to be forgotten.

For this reason I urge your support for HB 0003 to remove a major roadblock for men recommended for parole so they can return to their communities. The maturity and leadership skills they learned the hard way are sorely needed outside the walls especially by the younger generation.

Thank you for your service to the people of Maryland,

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