



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the
Appropriations Committee
and the
Judiciary Committee
on
House Bill 1123
March 9, 2023
Position: **Favorable**

Misters Chairmen, and members of the Committees, thank you for this opportunity to support restorative justice for incarcerated individuals in Maryland. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, EvangeliCal Lutheran Church in America. We are a faith community with three judicatories located in every region of our State.

Our community committed itself to work and advocate better outcomes for the incarcerated and their communities. We have said, *(t)o dramatically increase chances for success, re-entry support must begin long before release from prison. By identifying needs such as basic life-skill and job-skill training, education and treatment needs at sentencing, and then comprehensively addressing these needs during incarceration, the likelihood of successful transition back into the community is heightened.* (“The Church and Criminal Justice,” ELCA, 2013.)

We also conduct a ministry inside the Maryland Corrections system, the Community of St. Dysmas. One of its goals is supporting successful reentry into community, family, and society when its members are released. We share an interest of many others in restorative justice to reduce recidivism and reclaim human life for productive social engagement.

House Bill 1123 would establish the State minimum wage as compensation for work performed on the inside. This will benefit existing stated goals for correctional services during incarceration. Meaningful work should be lawfully compensated wherever it is performed. Making it so on the inside can be taken as a pledge of productive restoration to society, which is, after all, the point of calling criminal sentences “corrections.”

Therefore, we support **House Bill 1123** and ask a favorable report.

Lee Hudson