

# WRITTEN TESTIMONY

## IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 22

### Correctional Services – Incarcerated Individuals – Identification Cards and Driver’s Licenses

**Submitted by:**

**Desmond Haneef Perry**

Maryland Resident | Formerly Incarcerated Individual | Reentry Advocate | **MAJR Executive Committee**

**Committee:** Government, Labor, and Elections

**Position:** FAVORABLE

My name is **Desmond Haneef Perry**, and I submit this testimony in **strong support of House Bill 22**. I am a Maryland resident, a reentry advocate, and a person who served **20 years of incarceration** in Maryland’s correctional system. I am here to speak not only from policy analysis, but from lived experience.

When I was released after two decades of incarceration, I encountered an obstacle that may sound small on paper but is devastating in real life: **I did not have valid identification**.

Without a state-issued photo ID or driver’s license, I could not:

- Secure employment
- Access housing
- Open a bank account
- Obtain health care or behavioral health services
- Complete benefits enrollment
- Fully comply with parole and supervision requirements

In short, I was released from confinement but blocked from reentering society.

This is not an isolated experience. It is a **systemic reentry failure**, and HB22 addresses it directly.

House Bill 22 does three critical and overdue things:

1. **Ensures the return of existing identification**

If an incarcerated individual entered a state or local correctional facility with a **valid Motor Vehicle Administration identification card or driver’s license**, the bill requires that it be **returned at or before the time of release from confinement**

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2. **Requires proactive preparation before release**

For individuals serving **one year or more**, the bill mandates that **six months before anticipated release**, the Commissioner of Correction and local facility leadership must **provide appropriate forms and work with the incarcerated individual** to ensure that a valid MVA photo ID or driver's license is available upon release

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3. **Explicitly prevents delayed release**

The bill clearly states that **nothing in this section may be construed to delay release from confinement**—a vital safeguard that respects liberty interests and due process

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Identification is not a privilege—it is **foundational infrastructure for reentry**.

When individuals are released without ID:

- Employment is delayed
- Housing instability increases
- Access to treatment is disrupted
- The risk of recidivism rises

HB22 is not a “soft” bill—it is a **smart public safety bill**. It removes unnecessary administrative barriers that destabilize people at the most vulnerable moment of transition.

I did everything I was asked to do while incarcerated—programming, rehabilitation, and preparation for release. Yet upon release, I was functionally invisible to institutions because I lacked identification.

That delay cost time, dignity, and opportunity. HB22 ensures that future returning citizens are not set up to fail on day one.

## **Conclusion**

House Bill 22 reflects common sense, fiscal responsibility, and human dignity. It aligns correctional practice with reentry reality and ensures that release from confinement actually means **a meaningful chance at reintegration**.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **FAVORABLE REPORT** on HB22.

Thank you for your consideration.