

LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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Senator William C. Smith Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings

Senator Jeff Waldstreicher
Vice Chair, Judicial Proceedings

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland has voted to offer **favorable** support for three bills: SB 682- Pre-Release Unit of Women, Requirement to Operate; SB 683 Women's Prerelease Equity Act; and SB684 Gender Responsive Pre-Release Act. The purpose of these legislations are to provide equitable pre-release standards to post release facilitation for those returning citizens are getting the proper services and support they need to successfully reenter society and reduce the rates of recidivism.

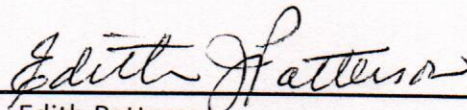
A large portion of African American women make up the share of women incarcerated in Maryland Correctional Institutional for Women (MCIW). The women deserve an opportunity to be successful in the same manner as incarcerated men in the State of Maryland and should be given fundamental access to the services and resources of a prerelease Unit.

In addition, based on best practice, including the requirement that prerelease facilities be located in areas where the largest portion of individuals are returning to in order to ensure their access to the needed resources and services for successful reentry.

We feel this legislation is important. This issue is both a serious gender equity issue as well as an issue of disparity. There are currently nine men's prerelease facilities across the state, but we have no facility for women. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland supports SB 682, SB 683, and SB684.

Respectfully,

Darryl Barnes
Chair, Legislative Black Caucus
of Maryland


Edith Patterson
1st Vice Chair, Legislative Black
Caucus of Maryland