WDL
Women's Democratic League
Frederick County, Maryland
1923-2018
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SUPPORT – HB608

Correctional Service- Pre-release Unit for Women Requirement to Operate
House Judiciary Committee
February 18, 2019

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Judiciary Committee members,

The Women's Democratic League of Frederick County (WDL) asks for your support of HB608 Pre-Release Unit for Women, Requirement to Operate.

For over 95 years, the WDL has been advocating for equality. We believe HB608 will correct the gender inequality for pre-release facilities and services provided in Maryland.

HB608 will require that women have the same access as men to pre-release facilities. In 2009 Maryland closed the only state-wide dedicated pre-release center for women. The state continues to operate over seven dedicated male pre-release facilities. HB608 would require the state to establish dedicated and separate pre-release facilities for women with gender-responsive and trauma aware programs.

In addition, HB608 provides economic stability to female-headed households in Maryland. Of the women incarcerated in Maryland, as many as 75% are primary caretakers for their children, with possibly over 40% as the sole provider for their families. Pre-Release programs are designed to prepare incarcerated persons for reintegration into society through access to job training, employment opportunities, community resources, housing and reentry planning assistance within a less restrictive and safe environment. HB608 will empower incarcerated women to focus on developing the skill sets to support a more successful integration upon release.

The passage of this bill would help put Maryland on the path to providing equal facilities and services for incarcerated women while strengthening the economic security of their children.

We encourage you to pass HB608.