



# Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

*Shared Voices for Liberal Religious Values in Maryland*

---

## Testimony in Support of SB 202 -Correctional Services - Parole - Life Imprisonment

To: Senator Will Smith, Chair and the Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
From: Candy Clark, Criminal Justice Task Force Chair,  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Date: February 3, 2021

My state-wide faith group, the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of MD, like many other advocacy groups, has supported this issue for many years. Our work is grounded in our values and principles. They guide us in which issues to select. When we say we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all people, we mean ALL, that includes the incarcerated: especially the ones who have been sentenced to LIFE in prison WITH the possibility of parole. This sentence has not been justly enforced.

We urge you to support this bill, because it applies to a segment of the prison population that are, for the most part, NOT getting the opportunity for parole even when the parole board reviews their record and deems them qualified. Currently, the governor is required to make the final decision on granting parole; which adds an additional layer of politics to this process and creates another hoop for them to jump through. The parole board (which is appointed by the governor) evaluates the qualifications of the person seeking parole and is recognized as doing a thorough investigation. It also allows for victim input by personal appearances or written statements. Maryland is still only one of three states that has the governor involved in this process!

Last fall I attended a fundraiser by a Lobby group whose key-note speaker was US Congressman Jamie Raskin. He formerly served as a MD state Senator for nine years and was held in high esteem here. While talking about the different types of legislation, he said that certain issues seemed **impossible** to change (like the death penalty and marriage equality) but as they linger in the legislative process over the years – they eventually become **inevitable**. SB 202 Correctional Services - Parole - Life Imprisonment or “Lifers with Parole” is such a bill. It has been kicked down the road for too many years.

The time is past due to honor the inherent worth and dignity of those citizens serving LIFE WITH THE POSSIBILITY FOR PAROLE. It is time for it to be as Jamie Raskin says **INEVITABLE**. The Unitarian Universalist Legislative of Ministry asks for a **FAVORABLE vote** for SB 202.

Thank you all for your caring service especially in these challenging times.

Sincerely,

*Karen Clark*

Karen “Candy” Clark

UULM-MD Criminal Justice Task Force Leader

**UULM-MD c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044,**

[www.uulmmd.org](http://www.uulmmd.org) [info@uulmmd.org](mailto:info@uulmmd.org) [www.facebook.com/uulmmd](http://www.facebook.com/uulmmd) [www.Twitter.com/uulmmd](http://www.Twitter.com/uulmmd)