

Bill No: SB 202
Title: Parole Reform
Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Hearing Date: 2/3/21
Position: SUPPORT

I believe that the Governor should not play a role in the parole process in Maryland. I urge a favorable report on this bill.

Maryland is one of only three states that includes the Governor in its decisions to grant parole. The introduction of politics in this process makes it difficult for governors to make an impartial decision that is not swayed by public opinion or fears regarding re-election if they make a wrong decision. It leaves the Maryland Parole Commission essentially powerless and keeps people in prison who have reformed their lives and could be productive members of our state if given the opportunity. It does not give them an opportunity to play a meaningful role in their children's lives. I worked with many children who had parents in prison and it was something that always stayed with them even as they grew older. It is unjust to say that a prisoner has life with the possibility of parole when that parole is very rarely -if ever-granted. Many of these prisoners went to prison when they were very young and have made significant changes in their lives since that time. Current data , including a study of those released under the Unger decision, supports the idea that prisoners are much less likely to re-offend if they are older and if they have received intensive re-entry support. I would much rather see my taxpayer funds being used for that purpose rather than continued imprisonment which does not benefit anyone including the victims.

Thank you for considering my views in your decision.

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