



**PREPARE**  
PREpare for PARole and REentry

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## **SBoo87 - Homicide or Life-Threatening Injury by Motor Vehicle or Vessel - Parole Eligibility and Penalties - OPPOSITION**

In Fiscal Year 2022, the Maryland Parole Commission heard 5,922 cases. Only 959 people were released on parole during that same time period.<sup>1</sup> Our parole commission reduced its grant rate by 66% between 2019 and 2022.<sup>2</sup> That is the fourth largest grant reduction among the 26 states that publish parole grant data. This is evidence of an extremely conservative Parole Commission and there is no reason for the Legislature to restrict its discretion.

Any case involving loss of life already requires an escalated administrative process with the Parole Commission that involves victim notification and a hearing involving two of the ten appointed Parole Commissioners. These additional steps ensure that full consideration is given to the victim's family and the case is thoroughly investigated and reviewed before the Commissioners render a decision. In my experience, many of these cases are heard later than their target hearing date due to the additional administrative processes and the outcome is usually rehearing or refusal.

While it serves little purpose other than restricting the Parole Commission from doing something it rarely if ever does anyway, SBoo87 would create a significant burden in training, system update and ongoing management for Parole, Case Management, Commitment and other departments. Most parole eligibility is calculated simply under CS 7-301 and is handled consistently with the good conduct credit diminution rate, but in the past other specific charges have been given special restrictions, often due to emotional reactions to a specific case or set of cases. These include certain drug charges, burglary, and suspended life sentences, all of which make excellent case studies for the negative impact of special charge treatment in bureaucratic systems that require efficiency to operate smoothly.

<sup>1</sup> Maryland Parole Commission, Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Report, page 12,  
[https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/DPSCS/MPC/COR7-208\\_2022.pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/DPSCS/MPC/COR7-208_2022.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Prison Policy Initiative, No Release: Parole grant rates have plummeted in most states since the pandemic started,  
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2023/10/16/parole-grants/>

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In my experience, I have occasionally seen improperly scheduled hearings and incorrectly calculated mandatory release dates, sometimes resulting in an individual being turned back from the gate as their family awaits them in the parking lot on the day they were told they could go home. More frequently, I see a case that bounces from department to department as error is introduced into the system and the case gets stuck in the crack. This results in extra work for DPSCS as each department works diligently to unravel the problem and fulfill its mandate, utilization of the Administrative Remedy Process, and even engagement of the Court.

If we want Maryland to run smoothly, each piece of our government, including the Parole Commission, must be empowered to perform its important work. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, and we must trust them to do their jobs. Micromanagement through legislation such as SBO087 serves little purpose other than to create confusion and administrative problems, and I urge you to vote against it.