



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

HB 118 – Correctional Services - Medical Geriatric Parole

POSITION: Favorable

BY: Linda Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters of Maryland supports a prison system that adopts, monitors, and enforces standards which provide a humane physical and psychological setting. Maryland law recognizes that in some situations the prison system is not a humane setting for an inmate with a severe physical or mental disability.

HB 118 would improve upon existing law by providing clearer definitions of terms and improved procedures for considering whether to grant parole in these circumstances. Significantly, the bill requires that the determination of the degree of disability be made by a licensed physician. The Parole Commission would also be required to consider the support services available to the inmate upon release and may require as a condition of release that the inmate be under the care of a medical provider. Thus, the bill strikes an appropriate balance in protecting public safety and the needs of inmates who are disabled by physical or mental conditions.

We urge a favorable report on HB 118.