



**Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services  
Office of Government & Legislative Affairs**

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**BILL: HOUSE BILL 1411**

**POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION**

**EXPLANATION:** This bill requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Department) to establish a Correctional Nursery Program to allow eligible incarcerated individuals and children born while in custody to reside together in a correctional facility.

**COMMENTS:**

- To participate in the correctional nursery program, an incarcerated individual must be pregnant at the time the individual is brought into the custody of the Department, gives birth while incarcerated, and has 12 months or less remaining on the individual's sentence when the child is born.
- The Department operates the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW) that houses female individuals committed to the Commissioner of Correction. MCIW houses all security levels from maximum, medium, minimum, pre-release and work release.
- There will be a substantial cost to accommodate a nursery program at MCIW. The cost depends on whether the Department can make facility renovations or if a purpose built unit will need to be constructed. Renovations are estimated at over \$4M and for a purpose built nursery space, the cost is estimated to be over \$10M. These estimates take into consideration not only a single cell unit big enough for mom and infant, but a nursery space, and medical unit for the infant care.
- A modification to the medical contract will also be required in order to provide medical staffing, including a pediatrician, pediatric nurse and as well as nursery staff. In addition, a modification to the pharmacy contract will be necessary.

- The potential legal exposure to the State of housing an infant in an adult correctional facility represents an unknown potential cost to the State.

**CONCLUSION:** The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating on House Bill 1411.