



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of the Secretary

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BILL: HOUSE BILL 1123

POSITION: LETTER OF SUPPORT

EXPLANATION: HB 1123 alters how medical parole is evaluated; removes the Governor from the approval process of medical parole requests and requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to submit to the Maryland Parole Commission the names of individuals who meet eligibility requirements for potential early release. Additionally, the Parole Commission shall conduct a risk assessment of the individuals and a parole release hearing.

COMMENTS:

- The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Department) operates the Division of Correction, the Division of Pretrial Detention and Services, and the Division of Parole and Probation.
- The Commission is charged with determining on a case-by-case basis whether incarcerated individuals serving sentences of six months or more in State or local facilities are suitable for release into the community under certain conditions or supervision by the Division of Parole and Probation.
- HB 1123 seeks to reform the parole process for medically vulnerable and elderly incarcerated individuals in Maryland.
- The bill removes the Governor from the medical parole decision process which would be consistent with the Senate Bill 202/Ch. 30 that passed in 2021 and removed the Governor from the regular parole process.
- In addition, the bill will require DPSCS, on a regular basis, to submit a roster of individuals to the Parole Commission that are at least 60 years of age; were incarcerated for at least 20 years; has had no major disciplinary infractions for the last three years; and are not serving life without parole.
- Within 60 days of receiving the roster, the Commission is required to conduct a risk assessment for the incarcerated individual.
- Under the bill, the Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board may recommend the allocation of funding for the hiring of additional psychologists needed to perform the risk assessments of the recommended individuals.
- Additional psychologists are critical to fulfill the completion of risk assessments within the 60-day time frame required under the bill.
- HB 1123 aims to modify current laws to ensure that these individuals are given the opportunity for medical and elder parole when appropriate, allowing them to receive necessary care in a more suitable environment.

CONCLUSION: For these reasons, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** Committee report on House Bill 1123.

STATE OF MARYLAND

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