

Bill: Senate Bill 187
Date: January 28, 2026
Position: Favorable with Amendments
Committee: Judicial Proceedings Committee

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

RE: Written Testimony in Support of SB187 – Favorable with Amendments

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SB187 and to urge a **Favorable with Amendments** report. My name is Crystal Carpenter, and I support this legislation because Maryland must ensure that prerelease services truly prepare people for successful reentry. I support SB187 because I want prerelease services to work well for everyone, and this bill strengthens opportunities for women while keeping the broader goal of fairness for all directly impacted people in view.

In 2021, the General Assembly passed the Gender-Responsive Pre-Release Act requiring DPSCS to establish a women's prerelease center with appropriate reentry programming. Although it should have opened by the end of 2023, DPSCS has delayed construction until FY2029 with an expected opening in FY2031.

SB187 is an important step forward, but it must be strengthened to ensure the women's prerelease center is built in the right place, at the right size, and with services delivered in the right way—so women in prerelease status are not left behind and Maryland fulfills its obligations.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to report SB187 Favorable with Amendments. Amend SB187 to ensure the LSRCW is located in a safe and appropriate site and built with sufficient capacity. Maryland has already committed to equitable prerelease services, and those serving have waited too long for a dedicated prerelease center that reflects their needs and supports family reunification, stability, and successful reentry. I also urge you to Restore the subtitle "The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act." In 2016, Monica Cooper, a formerly incarcerated woman, began this effort to reopen a pre-release center for Maryland's incarcerated women. In 2018, she co-founded the Women's Prerelease Equity Coalition. Although many Marylanders have supported this effort since the Coalition's founding, this work began with Monica Cooper, and her efforts to right a glaring injustice should be recognized.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a Favorable with Amendments report on SB187.

Respectfully submitted,

Crystal Carpenter
Founder, CivicMinded