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Legislative District 43
Baltimore City and Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Education

Environment



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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Written Testimony of Senator Mary Washington

Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 28, 2026

SUPPORT - Senate Bill 187

*Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female
Incarcerated Individuals*

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings and Budget and Taxation Committees,

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 187. I respectfully urge a favorable report. The legislation before the committee is in the same posture as Senate Bill SB632 (2025), which passed both the Judicial Proceedings and Budget and Taxation Committees and the Senate. Unfortunately, the Senate's amended bill did not move out of the House Judiciary Committee in time to reach the floor of the House of Delegates.

The policy behind this bill remains unchanged: to correct a longstanding inequity in Maryland's correctional system by ensuring women have access to the same rehabilitative prerelease services already available to men.

Maryland currently operates multiple standalone prerelease and minimum-security facilities for men, but none for women. In 2021, the General Assembly codified a requirement that the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) establish a dedicated prerelease facility for women by June 30, 2023, through the Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act. That bill was vetoed by Governor Hogan and promptly overridden.

Since then, the Department has failed to fulfill its obligation. This is not simply an administrative delay; it represents a fundamental failure to meet the rehabilitative needs of incarcerated women and to ensure parity in correctional services. Since 2022, this body has reaffirmed its commitment to the residents of MCIW and their families. Yet as of today, Maryland still lacks a standalone prerelease facility for women.

The consequences are serious. Without such a facility, eligible women remain housed in a maximum-security prison and are released without adequate reentry support. Too many return home unprepared, without access to the tools they need to rebuild their lives.

Recent DPSCS audits have highlighted serious gaps in reentry planning and mental health care for incarcerated women. The State must not compound those deficiencies by building a facility that is too small, poorly located, or incompatible with its intended purpose.

SB187 ensures that Maryland follows through on its promise. It reaffirms the existing legal mandate and provides specific statutory guardrails to ensure the prerelease facility is designed and built for its intended purpose.

Specifically, SB187:

- Requires the facility to be located on a site no smaller than three acres;
- Ensures the facility can accommodate all eligible women, rather than leaving some in mixed-security custody;
- Requires comprehensive planning and design for a community-based facility that supports job training, trauma-informed counseling, substance use treatment, family reunification, and stable housing preparation.

This is not a new mandate. It is a clarification. The prolonged inaction from DPSCS is not a reason to abandon oversight; it is a reason to strengthen it.

SB187 is about getting this right. It ensures Maryland builds a facility that reflects national best practices, delivers real rehabilitation, and avoids the costly consequences of building the wrong project in the wrong place.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB187.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Washington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Senator Mary Washington
Maryland State Senate, District 43