

SB 0187 Correctional Services - Comprehensive Reha

Uploaded by: Catherine OMalley

Position: FAV

BILL NO: Senate Bill 0187
TITLE: Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services
Female Incarcerated Individuals
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings, Budget and Taxation
HEARING DATE: January 28, 2026
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is dedicated to ensuring the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women throughout the State. It is with this mandate that we strongly advocate for the favorable report of Senate Bill 0187, and the end of Maryland's 16 years of illegal discrimination against women offenders in the state.

Since December 2009, when the Maryland Department of Corrections closed the Baltimore Prerelease Unit for Women, Maryland has denied equal facilities and services to incarcerated women in "prerelease" status. Prerelease programs provide housing and job search assistance, guidance on connecting with local support services, therapeutic programs for mental health and trauma, and most importantly, successful reunification of incarcerated individuals with their children and families. Good prerelease programs reduce recidivism, which is why Maryland currently operates several standalone prerelease and minimum-security facilities - *for men*. SB 0187 will end this inequity and provide equal access to these same opportunities for incarcerated women.

Incarcerated women in Maryland are returning home without jobs and housing, without learning or re-learning basic life skills, disconnected from their communities, and most importantly, without having laid the groundwork for successful family reunification. Two-thirds of incarcerated women are mothers, and close to half of those incarcerated mothers are single heads of households. When the Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act was passed into law in 2021, it should have been the end of this shameful disparity. However, it is now four years later and DPSCS has missed every deadline including for site selection, facility construction, and facility operation. What we do have is a revised project plan that falls short of the need and legal requirements established by the original pre-release bill.

SB 0187 addresses these issues including mandating an adequately sized site (not less than three acres with capacity for all women eligible for prerelease – not just the 64 beds slated in the current DPSCS plan) and requiring that prerelease services be both "gender-responsive" and available onsite, so incarcerated women are not exposed to potentially dangerous populations including non-prerelease eligible women or mixed-sex facilities.

Incarcerated women in Maryland who have earned prerelease status deserve equal facilities and programs as men, as required by both the U.S. Constitution and the Maryland Equal Rights Amendment. The Women's Law Center strongly supports the advocacy of the Women's Pre-Release Equity Coalition and the original sponsors Senator Mary Washington and Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield's efforts to redress this crisis in a manner that is sensitive to both the unique trauma and criminogenic risks faced by incarcerated women seeking successful reentry, recovery, and recidivism reduction. The Women's Law Center therefore vehemently urges our legislature to pass SB 0187.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a non-profit legal services organization whose mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland. Our mission is advanced through direct legal services, information and referral hotlines, and statewide advocacy.

SB0187 – Correctional Services – Comprehensive Reh

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0187

Correctional Services – Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services – Female Incarcerated Individuals

Bill Sponsor: Senator Mary Washington

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, Cochair

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0187 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

SB0187 is an emergency bill that takes long-overdue steps to ensure that women in Maryland’s correctional system have access to the comprehensive prerelease services they need to successfully reenter their communities. The bill updates the required specifications for a dedicated prerelease facility for female incarcerated individuals, to include a location in Baltimore, and directs the Department of General Services to oversee and fast-track the procurement process for its construction. It also requires the Commissioner of Correction to make gender-responsive services available—programming that recognizes the distinct experiences, trauma histories, and reentry needs of women. Finally, the bill sets a clear deadline for a comprehensive plan by September 1, 2026, ensuring that this work moves forward without further delay.

Maryland has talked for years about the need for a women’s prerelease center, yet the absence of such a facility continues to harm women who are preparing to return home. Without access to trauma-informed counseling, job training, parenting support, and other reentry services, women face higher barriers to stability, employment, and family reunification. SB0187 provides the structure and accountability needed to finally deliver on the state’s commitment to these individuals.

This bill directly advances the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. Our work is rooted in equity, dignity, and the belief that government systems must support—not hinder—people’s ability to rebuild their lives. SB0187 strengthens public safety by investing in rehabilitation rather than recidivism. It promotes fairness by ensuring that women receive the same level of prerelease support that men already have access to. And it reinforces our commitment to a justice system that recognizes humanity and fosters successful reentry.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0187.

SB0187 - Correctional Services - Comprehensive Reh

Uploaded by: Charlotte Hoffman

Position: FAV



Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Esq. (they/she)
Policy Director
charlotte@transmaryland.org

Wednesday January 28, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland

IN SUPPORT OF

Senate Bill #187: Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender, trans-led community power building organization dedicated to Maryland's trans community. Because Trans Maryland believes in protecting the equal rights of all Marylanders, including those who are incarcerated, we are testifying today in support of Senate Bill 187.

In 2020, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act (SB684/HB801), which required the Commissioner of the Division of Correction to operate a comprehensive rehabilitative prerelease facility for individuals incarcerated at women's facilities. Six years later, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services remains out of compliance with the law, and no such facility exists. Meanwhile, individuals incarcerated at men's facilities have access to a separate prerelease facility that has been integral in helping them integrate back into broader society.

While we appreciate the budgetary and other considerations that have delayed compliance with the Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act, they do not excuse the simple fact that the status quo discriminates against incarcerated individuals on the basis of gender—resources are made available to incarcerated individuals who are male or perceived to be male, while denied to those who are female or perceived to be female. This is a patent violation of both Maryland law and the federal Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.

While Trans Maryland is a decarceral organization and strongly believes in working towards a future in which restorative justice, rather than incarceration, is the default, this does not mean that



Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Esq. (they/she)

Policy Director

charlotte@transmaryland.org

we cannot simultaneously fight against the injustices of the status quo. The gender-based discrimination in Maryland's current prerelease system is intolerable. Because Senate Bill 187 would end this overt injustice in our carceral system, Trans Maryland **strongly urges a favorable report.**

SB187 Favorable 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Debi Jasen

Position: FAV

Judicial Proceedings
Senate Bill 187
Favorable

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee;

You've heard Senate Bill 187 before. Last year, this bill received a favorable report from your committee after a hearing that had no unfavorable testimony. It also passed out of the Senate, but unfortunately the General Assembly ran out of time and it didn't make it to the House (which passed the crossfile.) Let's get it over the finish line this time! Please give Senate Bill 187 a favorable report (and soon!) Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Debi Jasen
Pasadena, MD

EzraTowne_SB0187_Favorable_2026_0126 (JPR).pdf

Uploaded by: Ezra Towne

Position: FAV

EZRA MACLEOD TOWNE

Testimony Favorable to SB0187: Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals

January 26, 2026

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair, Senator Jeff Waldsreicher, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is Ezra Towne, and my pronouns are they/them. I am writing to you today to ask you to vote favorably on SB0187.

SB0187 would correct an inequity in our judicial system for women by establishing a Women's Prerelease Facility in Baltimore City. At present, there is no prerelease facility for female inmates while there are multiple such facilities available for men. This is unacceptable.

Prerelease facilities can establish programs and services that prepare incarcerated individuals for a successful reentry into the community outside of prison. Maryland's male prerelease facilities life skills and job readiness training as well as individual reentry plans that help secure new personal documentation like birth certificates and social security cards, connections to housing opportunities and other forms of assistance such as food programs like SNAP, voter registration services, and Maryland legal aid information, and more.

Prerelease facilities and programs are essential for all incarcerated individuals - preventing recidivism when inmates reenter a world they haven't lived in for years.

Why shouldn't incarcerated women be eligible for a similar program that is curtailed to their specific needs?

The answer isn't budgetary, it's institutionalized sexism. For these reasons, **I ask for a favorable vote on SB0187 - Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals**

Sincerely,
Ezra MacLeod Towne
Wheaton, D18

EzraTowne_SB0187_Favorable_2026_0126 (JPR).pdf

Uploaded by: Ezra Towne

Position: FAV

EZRA MACLEOD TOWNE

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Uploaded by: Ezra Towne

Position: FAV

EZRA MACLEOD TOWNE

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Sincerely,
Ezra MacLeod Towne
Wheaton, D18

SB187-Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabi

Uploaded by: Jessica Morgan

Position: FAV



Bill No: SB187
Title: Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals
Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Hearing: January 28, 2026
Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women's groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW's purpose is to advocate for legislation affecting women and families. To accomplish this goal, MLAW creates an annual legislative agenda with issues voted on by MLAW members and endorsed by organizations and individuals from all over Maryland. [SB187- Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals](#) is a priority on the [2026 MLAW Agenda](#) and we urge your support.

SB187- Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals will require that DPSCS meet certain locational, acreage, bed-capacity and programming requirements in the construction and operation of the women's prerelease center required by the Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act of 2021 to ensure that the facility provides adequate space for programming, outdoor space, and bed capacity for all women in prerelease status now and into the future. The bill also requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to provide those services at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCI-W) prior to completion of the women's prerelease center.

There is no women's prerelease center that provides comprehensive rehabilitative prerelease services for female incarcerated individuals. The Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act of 2021 required the construction and operation of such a facility by 2023, but the facility has not been designed and built. The current plans developed by the Department of General Services and DPSCS are unacceptable in a number of key respects:

- The selected site, 717 Forrest Street, Baltimore City, is located in a dangerous, high drug-trafficking area within the Pre-Trial and Detention Center Complex
- The area of the site is too small to accommodate the facility and green outdoor space needed for the women and their families
- The small bed capacity of the facility will not accommodate all the women eligible to be housed at the facility
- The women's critical therapeutic programming will be held at the to-be-built Baltimore Therapeutic Treatment Center, a co-ed maximum-security detention facility not geared to the needs of women who are returning from long incarceration

A separate pre-release housing unit for women is essential because women in custody have distinct safety, trauma, and reentry needs that are often unmet in mixed-gender settings. Many are survivors of domestic or sexual violence and require a secure, women-only environment to engage fully in trauma-informed programming and reentry planning. Women also face unique challenges related to family reunification,

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women
102 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 100 • Towson, MD 21204 • 443-519-1005 phone/fax
mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com • www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org

caregiving responsibilities, and higher rates of unmet physical and behavioral health needs. A dedicated unit allows for gender-responsive services focused on healing, parenting, health care continuity, employment readiness, and housing stability, improving reentry outcomes, reducing recidivism, and strengthening families and communities.

MLAW strongly urges the passage of SB187.

MLAW 2026 Supporting Organizations

The following organizations have signed on in support of our 2026 Legislative Agenda*:

American Association of University Women-Anne Arundel County
American Association of University Women-Kensington-Rockville
American Association of University Women-Maryland
American Association of University Women-Garrett Branch
American Association of University Women-Howard County Branch
Baltimore County Commission for Women
Business and Professional Women – Montgomery County
Bound for Better, advocates for Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse
Campaign for Eneshal Galloway at Large Candidacy
Crabs On The Shore
Jack and Jill of America Western Maryland Chapter
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
Montgomery County Commission for Women
National Organization for Women, Carroll County Chapter
National Organization for Women, Montgomery County Chapter
Postpartum Support International - Maryland
Prince George's County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.
Postpartum Support International, Maryland Chapter
Self-Reflections: Social-Emotional, Behavioral and Advocacy Services, LLC
Stella's Girls, Incorporated
SUB&S LLC
The Heart Nest
The Rest Of A Life (TROAL)
Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc.
Top Ladies of Distinction, Incorporated, Patuxent River Chapter
Unrooted Culture
Women's Commission for Baltimore City
Women's Equity Center and Action Network
Zonta Club of Annapolis

**As of 1/23/2026*

SB 187 - Community Based Reentry and Prerelease Se

Uploaded by: Kirsten Downs

Position: FAV



NATASHA DARTIGUE
PUBLIC DEFENDER

KEITH LOTRIDGE
DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

ELIZABETH HILLIARD
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: Senate Bill 187 – Correctional Services – Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services – Female Incarcerated Individuals

FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender

POSITION: FAVORABLE

DATE: January 23, 2026

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender submits this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 187, which will expand and stabilize prerelease services for women so they can return home safely, maintain employment, and avoid reincarceration.

Senate Bill 187 aims to establish a women’s prerelease facility in Baltimore City, ensuring that women with prerelease status receive comprehensive, gender-responsive reentry services within a defined timeline and with proper oversight. The legislation seeks to transform the women’s prerelease unit from a mere concept into a tangible, adequately sized facility that meets specific design standards and adheres to clear procurement deadlines. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of providing evidence-based, gender-responsive prerelease and reentry services to women nearing release, regardless of their current housing situation, rather than waiting for the new facility to open. This legislation is vital to closing gender-based reentry service gaps, reducing racial disparities, and fostering sustainable reintegration that benefits individual women, their families, and their communities.

Unique Challenges Faced by Incarcerated Women

Women leaving incarceration encounter a variety of challenges that are often different from those of their male counterparts, making gender-responsive reentry services essential. A significant proportion of incarcerated women have experienced trauma, substance abuse, and mental health issues. Women involved in the criminal legal system report greater instances of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as childhood abuse, neglect, family instability, and exposure to domestic violence, than both justice-involved men and women outside of the system.¹ Many of these traumatic experiences lead to co-occurring disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance use disorders, and depression, making successful reintegration more difficult without adequate psychological support. Women who do not receive appropriate trauma-informed care are at higher risk of relapse, recidivism, and instability post-release.²

¹ Lehrer, Danielle. “Trauma-Informed Care: The Importance of Understanding the Incarcerated Woman.” *Journal of Correctional Health Care* 27, no. 2 (2021): 121–26. <https://doi.org/10.1089/jchc.20.07.0060>.

² U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Women in Prison: Issues and Challenges Confronting U.S. Correctional Systems*. Washington, DC, 1999. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles/171668.pdf>.

Additionally, the majority of incarcerated women are family caregivers. In Maryland, 75% of incarcerated women have children who rely on them for day-to-day needs. Upon release, many of these women struggle to regain custody of their children due to barriers to securing suitable housing or steady employment.³ Housing instability is another key barrier for formerly incarcerated women. Without sufficient reentry programs focused on securing long-term, safe housing, many women either experience homelessness or return to unsafe environments. Without stable housing, their ability to regain custody of their children and provide a stable home environment is significantly compromised.⁴ These challenges demonstrate the necessity of comprehensive, gender-specific reentry programs. Without interventions addressing mental health, housing, employment, family reunification, and trauma-informed support, women leaving prison are set up for continued struggles that contribute to ongoing economic instability.

Racial Disparities Impacting Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women of Color

By mandating comprehensive, gender-responsive prerelease and reentry services, Senate Bill 187 directly targets the employment and housing barriers that fall most heavily on Black and Latinx women, turning what is now an almost impenetrable ‘prison penalty’ into a structured pathway to stability. Studies reveal that formerly incarcerated women of color face additional barriers to securing stable employment and housing upon their release.⁵ Racial disparities are evident in the statewide unemployment rates of formerly incarcerated Black women, which rank among the highest in the nation, exceeding 43%.⁶ The Prison Policy Institute reported in 2018 that formerly incarcerated Black women face exceptionally high unemployment rates, whereas white men enjoy the lowest. Specifically, Black women endure the highest “prison penalties,” which elevate unemployment rates by 14 percentage points for white men and as much as 37 percentage points for Black women compared to their general population peers.⁷ For Black and Latinx people returning to their communities, incarceration creates an almost impenetrable barrier to employment and economic stability. Passing Senate Bill 187 will not eliminate the deep racial disparities faced by formerly incarcerated women of color. Still, it will give Maryland a concrete, statewide tool to reduce those disparities by connecting women to jobs, housing, and support.

The Current Landscape of Reentry Services for Women in Maryland

In Maryland, women involved in the criminal legal system are often overlooked and underserved. There are a few services and policies that address their unique needs.⁸ Maryland’s reentry support disparity between women and men is stark. In 2020, the ACLU of Maryland highlighted that while there were nine state-funded pre-release centers available for men, the absence of any pre-release centers for women leaves incarcerated women without access to essential services such as job training, employment opportunities, and comprehensive reentry planning that facilitate successful reintegration in a supportive

³ U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Women in Prison: Issues and Challenges Confronting U.S. Correctional Systems*. Washington, DC, 1999. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles/171668.pdf>.

⁴ Goshin, Lorie S., and Mary W. Byrne. “Reentry and Reunification: The Experiences of Mothers and Their Children after Incarceration.” *Health & Social Work* 37, no. 1 (2012): 36–48. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7449251/>

⁵ Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform. *Maryland Reentry Roundtable Report*. Annapolis, MD, 2019. <https://www.ma4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2019-Reentry-Roundtable-Booklet.pdf>.

⁶ Couloute, Lucius, and Daniel Kopf. “Out of Prison & Out of Work: Unemployment among Formerly Incarcerated People.” Prison Policy Initiative, July 2018. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/outofwork.html>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Maryland Commission for Women. *Justice-Involved Maryland Women: A 2025 Status Report*. Annapolis, MD, 2025.

environment.⁹ The lack of gender-responsive reentry services exacerbates the challenges women face upon release and can place them at heightened risk of recidivism.

Senate Bill 1872: A Path to Success at Home

Senate Bill 187 aims to bridge this gap by establishing comprehensive, gender-responsive prerelease services for incarcerated women. Recent studies have shown that evidence-based education and job training in pre-release, paired with post-release support, can significantly increase the likelihood of securing stable employment and reduce the incidence of rearrest among women.

One of the few current programs available to women before and after incarceration is the PIVOT program. Based in Baltimore City, PIVOT is a community-informed reentry program focused on workforce development and long-term stability after release. The program serves women from pretrial through many years post-release. Gender-specific prerelease services, like PIVOT's model, show that when programming is designed around women's actual experiences, their readiness and ability to succeed after release increase dramatically.¹⁰ By addressing trauma, caregiving responsibilities, housing insecurity, and employment barriers together, women are better prepared to secure stable work, maintain safe housing, and avoid reincarceration.

Senate Bill 187 presents a significant opportunity to expand successful support to more women in Maryland. By mandating comprehensive, gender-responsive prerelease and reentry services for all women with prerelease status, and by establishing a dedicated women's prerelease facility in Baltimore City, this legislation aims to integrate vital resources into the core of Maryland's correctional and reentry system.

When women are equipped with treatment, essential documents, and a realistic reentry plan upon leaving custody, it creates positive ripple effects for their children, families, and communities. This not only reduces involvement with the justice system but also fosters more stable caregiving environments.

Additionally, Senate Bill 187 prioritizes expanding partnerships with community-based organizations, many of which are embedded within communities of color and have the cultural competence to provide effective support. By fostering collaboration between correctional facilities and these organizations, the legislation bridges the gap between incarceration and community reintegration, ensuring continuity of care for returning women who have historically been underserved.

Furthermore, the bill's requirement for outcome-based monitoring and data collection is vital. Collecting disaggregated data on reentry outcomes by race and gender will enable Maryland to pinpoint areas for improvement and tailor future initiatives to address ongoing disparities. It also emphasizes the importance of employing evidence-based strategies to enhance reentry programming and mitigate the disproportionate effects on marginalized communities.

Without targeted intervention, the cycle of reincarceration will persistently harm women of color and the communities they return to. By investing in comprehensive reentry services, Senate Bill 187 empowers formerly incarcerated women to navigate structural barriers better, thereby fostering their long-term success and alleviating pressure on the state's criminal justice system.

⁹ American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland, "Men Have Nine Pre-Release Centers. Women Have Zero," ACLU of Maryland, accessed January 22, 2026, <https://www.aclu-md.org/en/news/men-have-nine-pre-release-centers-women-have-zero>

¹⁰ PIVOT. "PIVOT Women's Reentry Pilot Program." The Awesome Foundation. Accessed January 22, 2026. <https://www.awesomefoundation.org/en/projects/99510-pivot-women-s-reentry-pilot-program>.

Conclusion

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender strongly urges the Committee to advance Senate Bill 187's goal of closing reentry service gaps for incarcerated women and affirm Maryland's commitment to justice and equity for all citizens by focusing on equitable access, tailored services, and community-based collaboration. Maryland can and must do more to ensure that incarcerated women receive the necessary support to rebuild their lives and care for their families.

For these reasons, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender urges this Committee to issue a FAVORABLE REPORT on Senate Bill 187.

Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Government Relations Division.

Authored by: Kirsten Gettys Downs
Director of Systemic Reform
Maryland Office of the Public Defender
Kirsten.Downs@maryland.gov

Corrections - women and prerelease - testimony - s

Uploaded by: Lisae C Jordan

Position: FAV



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

P.O. Box 8782
Silver Spring, MD 20907
Phone: 301-565-2277
mcasa.org

For more information contact:
Lisae C. Jordan, Esquire
443-995-5544

Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 187
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
January 28, 2026

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is a non-profit membership organization that includes the State's seventeen rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI) which provides direct legal services for survivors across Maryland. We urge the Judicial Proceedings Committee and the Budget & Taxation Committee to report favorably on Senate Bills 683 and 684

Senate Bill 187 – Pre-Release Services for Women

This bill sets specific deadlines and requirements for creation of a pre-release facility for women who are incarcerated and preparing to return to their communities. The General Assembly previously enacted legislation requiring that the State:

- (1) identify a location, acquire property, and design a site plan for the prerelease unit for women on or before June 1, 2021;
- (2) begin construction or renovation of the facility on or before September 6 1, 2021; and
- (3) begin operating and providing services in the facility on or before June 8 1, 2023.

This has not happened and SB187 would set new deadlines for this important project.

86 percent of women who have spent time in jail report that they had been sexually assaulted at some point in their lives. While women represented just 13 percent of the US jail population between 2009 and 2011, they represented 67 percent of the victims of staff-on-inmate sexual victimization.

(Overlooked: Women and Jails in an Era of Reform, Vera Institute, 2016)

Within our State, 12.7% of inmates at the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women reported being sexually victimized by a fellow inmate or staff member. (Allen J. Becket al, "Sexual Victimization in Prisons and Jails Reported by Inmates, 2011–12", Bureau of Justice Statistics, May 2013.) Sexual violence is so pronounced among jailed and incarcerated women that Sen. Cory Booker, (D-NJ,) has labeled the overarching phenomenon as "a survivor-of-sexual-trauma to prisoner pipeline."

It is critical that women have access to services prior to release from incarceration. Pre-release services will include connecting sexual assault survivors with local rape crisis centers and other vital support. This can include therapy, support groups, and information about recovering from sexual violence.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judicial Proceedings Committee and Budget & Taxation Committee to
report favorably on Senate Bill 187**

SB187

Uploaded by: Mary Washington

Position: FAV

MARY L. WASHINGTON, PH.D
Legislative District 43
Baltimore City and Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Education

Environment



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 104
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3145
800-492-7122 Ext. 3145
Mary.Washington@senate.state.md.us

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

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAVSB187_.pdf

Uploaded by: Michelle Zelaya

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

January 28th, 2026
SB187

**Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female
Incarcerated Individuals
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 187**. The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 187 Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services Female Incarcerated Individuals updates and strengthens prerelease services for female incarcerated individuals by establishing requirements for a comprehensive, gender-responsive prerelease facility. It directs the Department of General Services to oversee procurement for the construction of the facility and requires the Commissioner of Correction to ensure that gender-responsive rehabilitative services are available. The bill further mandates the implementation of comprehensive prerelease services—including education, workforce development, mental health care, and reentry support—by **September 1, 2026**, to better prepare women for successful reintegration into their communities.

The Catholic Church has long upheld the belief that our justice system must serve not only to hold individuals accountable but also to offer them opportunities for rehabilitation and restoration. Access to education, vocational training, mental health care, and family reunification services is essential for women reentering society, many of whom have experienced domestic violence, caregiving disruptions, and economic instability. This legislation recognizes those realities and responds with a rehabilitative approach that prioritizes healing, stability, and long-term success.

As Catholics, we believe deeply in the redemptive power of God's mercy and the importance of second chances. The Gospel calls us to visit and care for those who are imprisoned (*Matthew 25:36*), reminding us that their dignity does not diminish because of incarceration. Establishing a dedicated prerelease facility for women is more than a policy decision—it is an affirmation of human dignity and a meaningful investment in restorative justice that benefits individuals, families, and communities alike.

Women in correctional facilities often face distinct challenges, including histories of trauma, family separation, and limited access to gender-responsive rehabilitative services. Many

are also mothers, and ensuring their successful transition back into society directly impacts the well-being of their children and families. Pope Francis has emphasized, “A just and necessary punishment must never exclude the dimension of hope and the goal of rehabilitation.”¹

For these reasons, The Maryland Catholic Conferences urges a Favorable report on **Senate Bill 187**.

¹ Pope Francis, Address to United States Congress, September 24, 2015.

Testimony in support of SB0187 - Correctional Serv

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0187 RichardKaplowitz FAV

01/28/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0187- POSITION: FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0187, **Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals**

Pre-release status is defined as “the lowest security level for inmates who present the least risk of violence or escape and have established an excellent record of acceptable behavior.” Individuals granted pre-release status may have access to the community for work release, special leave, compassionate leave, and family leave.

Currently, in the state of Maryland, men have NINE separate pre-release and minimum-security facilities while women have ZERO. At the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCI-W) in Jessup, Maryland, as many as 1 in 10 women have achieved pre-release status. However, as many as 30% of the women on pre-release status have not been assigned to a work opportunity.¹

This bill attempts to respond to this disparity between men’s and woman’s pre-release facilities by altering the required specifications for a certain prerelease facility for female incarcerated individuals; requiring the Department of General Services to direct the procurement processes for the construction of a certain prerelease facility for female incarcerated individuals; requiring the Commissioner of Correction to make gender-responsive services available to certain female incarcerated individuals; requiring the implementation of comprehensive prerelease services for certain individuals by September 1, 2026; etc.

This is a long overdue need in how we treat females transitioning from incarceration back to the community and society through services specific to them.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0187.

¹ <https://www.out4justice.org/women-s-pre-release>

2026 ACNM SB187 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings and Budget and Taxation Committee

Bill: Senate Bill 187 – Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals

Hearing Date: January 28, 2026

Position: Support

The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) strongly supports *Senate Bill 187 – Correctional Services – Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services – Female Incarcerated Individuals*. This legislation moves Maryland toward a more appropriate prerelease model for women by establishing a dedicated women’s prerelease facility and ensuring comprehensive services are delivered in a timely manner.

Senate Bill 187 takes an important step to improve the health outcomes of women who are incarcerated. Women in Maryland’s correctional system experience higher rates of chronic health conditions, mental illness, and trauma than those who are not (National Institute of Justice, *Five Things to Know About Women and Reentry*). There is no existing center in Maryland providing prerelease programs specifically for incarcerated women. Without proper prerelease planning, these conditions frequently worsen upon release, creating ongoing challenges as women transition back into their communities.

ACNM members recognize that access to appropriate clinical care, mental health services, and continuity of care prior to release is crucial for successful reentry. Research shows that gender-responsive prerelease and reentry programs improve health outcomes and reduce the likelihood of returning to incarceration (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Correctional Health: Reentry*). Senate Bill 187 is critical as it appropriately requires these services to begin before release and includes measures to ensure timely implementation.

We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

SB 187 FAV Testimony AAUW AAC.pdf

Uploaded by: Roxann King

Position: FAV



Testimony of American Association of University Women of Anne Arundel County

to the

Maryland General Assembly Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

in support of

**Senate Bill 187: Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services – Female Incarcerated
Individuals**

Submitted by Roxann King, President, AAUW Anne Arundel County, 2535 Painter Court, Annapolis, MD 21401

Please provide a favorable report on Senate Bill 187, the revised Pre-release Center for Incarcerated Women. Please make it a good place for women to learn how to restart their lives.

I have been lobbying for this bill for about ten years. The first year I explained the bill to Women of Like Mind, a women's group in Annapolis. One of the women was a teacher in Baltimore. She related how distressed a mother of one of her students was, when she was released, could not find a job, had to support her children, and wanted the best for her family. It is hard to believe we are still fighting for a center that would treat women well, in the way that men are treated by our State.

The center needs to have at least 2 acres and room to park so that families can visit safely, spend time outdoors, and the women could possibly even garden.

The center needs to accommodate all the women expecting pre-release. This is important to all of them. It needs to house the training that is specific to women preparing to take on roles as caretakers and providers of families. It needs to provide on-site support for starting without drugs or alcohol or any of the things that can lead right back to prison.

It needs to be in a neighborhood that is not known as high crime or drug-infested and unsafe for family visitation. The DPW site is only 0.97 acres. That won't work. But locating in or near Baltimore is desirable since over 40% of the women will return to families in Baltimore.

A building that can only accommodate 64 women does not meet the needs of the pre-release population. The previously closed center accommodated 144 women.

Please make this happen in a way that gives these Maryland women a hope of becoming good citizens and mothers. Support Senate Bill 187 as best you can.

SB 187 Letter - Support - Jud Proc.pdf

Uploaded by: Taylor Dickerson

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

9175 Guilford Road, Ste 300 #1112, Columbia, MD 21046 | 410-992-4258 | www.marylandpsychology.org

January 26, 2026

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Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 187 – Correctional Services – Comprehensive Prerelease Services – Female Incarcerated Individuals

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to **report favorably on SB 187**.

Senate Bill 187, which strengthens Maryland's prerelease and reentry framework for incarcerated women through a comprehensive, evidence-based, and gender-responsive approach. By requiring a dedicated prerelease facility and mandating rehabilitative services tailored to women's needs, this bill addresses longstanding deficiencies in how the correctional system prepares women for safe and successful reentry into their communities.

Women in custody disproportionately experience trauma, mental health challenges, caregiving disruptions, and economic instability. SB 187 appropriately responds by requiring trauma-informed services, access to education and workforce training, health and behavioral health care, and individualized reentry planning. These measures reflect best practices in correctional rehabilitation and are associated with improved reentry outcomes, reduced recidivism, and stronger family and community stability.

Finally, SB 187 includes clear timelines, procurement requirements, and independent oversight to ensure accountability and transparency in implementation. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the General Assembly to support SB 187 and advance a correctional policy that promotes rehabilitation, public safety, and long-term community well-being.

We urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report on SB 187**. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D. at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.

President

Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.

Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.

Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs

CFW SB 0187.pdf

Uploaded by: Tiffany Boiman

Position: FAV



**COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CLUSTER**

January 26, 2026

Senator William C. Smith
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 0187 Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chairperson Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

On behalf of the Montgomery County Commission for Women, I am writing to ask for your support of SB 0187 — Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals. Constructing and operating a dedicated pre-release center for justice-involved women returning to their communities embodies the state's fundamental obligation to provide equality to men and women under the law. At the same time, the complementary set of services provided in the pre-release setting, which, as articulated, would include employment and training services, medical and mental health treatment, family reunification support, housing assistance and other wraparound supports coupled with a less-restrictive environment than a traditional prison setting, sets conditions for women ex-offenders to return to their families and communities better equipped to achieve successful re-integration, and, in turn, better social, emotional, employment and economic outcomes for themselves and their families.

Statistics show that fully 80 percent of incarcerated women are mothers and many were primary or sole providers prior to incarceration. The two-generation ripple-effect implications of women's incarceration and release only amplifies Maryland's obligation to ensure the pre-release center for women is properly situated and equipped to deliver the services, residential capacity and setting to facilitate women's successful re-introduction to their families and communities, all of which will pay dividends not just for the women they're serving, but for the families they'll support and the communities that will receive them. We urge that this be the session to realize established commitments and aspirations to deliver on behalf of Maryland women who have been justice-involved.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Tiffany Boiman
Policy and Legislative Committee
Montgomery County Commission for Women

21 Maryland Avenue, Suite #330 □ Rockville, Maryland 20850-1703 □ 240/777-8333 □ FAX 240-777-2555
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

Senate Bill 187 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Crystal Carpenter

Position: FWA

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

Senate Bill 187.pdf

Uploaded by: Crystal Carpenter

Position: FWA

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

Crystal Carpenter
Founder, CivicMinded

SB 187 - Women's Prerelease - ACLU Testimony (Jan

Uploaded by: Frank Patinella

Position: FWA



**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senate Bill 187 – Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative
Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals**

Favorable with Amendments

January 28, 2026

FRANK PATINELLA
SENIOR POLICY
STRATEGIST

AMERICAN CIVIL
LIBERTIES UNION
OF MARYLAND

3600 CLIPPER MILL ROAD
SUITE 200
BALTIMORE, MD 21211
T/410-889-8555
F/410-366-7838

WWW.ACLU-MD.ORG

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GENERAL COUNSEL

The ACLU of Maryland supports Senate Bill 187 with amendments. SB 187 seeks to ensure that a women’s prerelease facility is built and that women who are eligible for prerelease can reside there and receive comprehensive gender-responsive services to prepare them for reentry. The Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act of 2020, was enacted in 2021, after the Maryland General Assembly overrode then-Governor Hogan’s veto. The 2020 bill required the prerelease center to open and provide services in 2023. However, that never happened due to delays of the previous administration. While we applaud the effort of Governor Moore’s administration to move this project forward, we urge the committee to collaborate with the Women’s Prerelease Equity Coalition (“Coalition”) to ensure that the center aligns with the needs of impacted women to the maximum extent possible.

The ACLU of Maryland supported the Coalition’s efforts to oppose the proposal by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and the Department of General Services (DGS) to use the Forrest Street site for a women’s prelease center. We appreciate DPSCS and DGS for meeting with the Coalition in November 2025 to discuss the significant concerns with this location, and for subsequently withdrawing the spending item from the Board of Public Works docket in December 2025 to allow for consideration of alternative sites. Women in prerelease should not be placed in an area where illicit drug activity is prevalent – nor should they be expected to receive services adjacent to the planned Baltimore Therapeutic and Treatment Center, which will primarily serve men for addiction and related needs. To give women in prelease the strongest chance at success, the facility must be in a safe and stable location that provides meaningful access employment opportunities and for family members to stay connected.

We agree with the intent of SB 187 to ensure that the women’s prerelease facility is not placed in close proximity to an existing correctional facility. However, as recently discussed with DPSCS, the one-mile radius in the bill significantly restricts viable options for the location of the prerelease center. **We respectfully ask the committee to work with the Coalition to revise the bill language to expand potential locations. We also urge the committee to collaborate with the Coalition on amendments to guarantee that all women in prerelease will receive their services at the new dedicated women’s prerelease center – and not at any other correctional facility.**

In terms of the capacity of the prerelease center, the ACLU supports the parameters set in SB 187 – specifically, a facility size equal to 1.25 times the number of women at MCIW who were eligible for prerelease in 2024. According to DPSCS reports, this would equal to 93 beds.

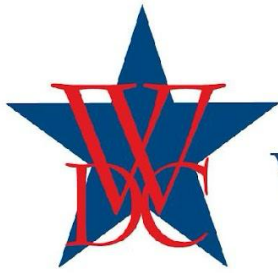
We support the bill's requirement that DPSCS develop a comprehensive plan to provide gender responsive prerelease services by September 2026. This is critically important given that the Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act required these services to be provided in 2023, along with the opening of the facility. With the facility now not expected to open for several years, many impacted women – although they received some services at MCIW – have not fully benefitted from comprehensive gender-responsive supports envisioned by the law. **To define what comprehensive gender-responsive services should include, we ask the committee to amend the bill to ensure that this planning process be a collaborative effort among DPSCS, the Coalition, and other impacted women.**

Too many women have served their time without being given the strongest chance at successful reentry. Maryland must do better. We urge the committee to pass SB 187 and work with the Coalition to adopt the aforementioned amendments.

SB 187 FWA WDC Jan 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Kate Stein

Position: FWA



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

**Senate Bill 0187 – Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative
Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals**

Judicial Proceedings Committee – January 28, 2026

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

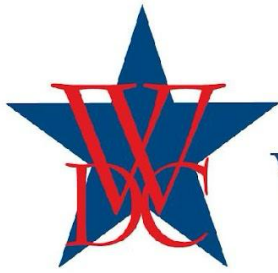
Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

We urge swift passage, with suggested amendments, of SB187 Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals. This bill will ensure that women incarcerated in Maryland are ready, when released, to build a future better than the past—for their children, families, and communities as well as themselves.

Women who have engaged in criminal behavior have a very different profile from that of men who have engaged in criminal behavior. Women tend to be older; have experienced multiple physical, sexual, or emotional traumas; and often end up encountering the criminal justice system as a direct result of their involvement with men. For this reason, pre-release services need to be gender-specific (i.e., tailored to women's unique needs), trauma-informed, and evidence-based.

The Gender-Responsive Pre-Release Act of 2021 required DPSCS to provide incarcerated women with those services in a pre-release facility of their own. Research indicates that providing comprehensive therapeutic services, education, job training, and family reunification lowers recidivism rates and helps women successfully move forward with their lives. Moreover, when women can get back on their feet, maintain employment, and successfully reunite with their children and families, they are able to give the next generation a fighting chance. Conversely, without gender-responsive, trauma-informed, evidence-based services, women's reintegration into their families and communities will be more challenging, with predictable negative downstream effects on the next generation.

Since late 2009, when the Baltimore Pre-Release Unit for Women was shuttered, women in pre-release status have had no dedicated facility where they can receive the gender-responsive, trauma-informed, evidence-based services they need. We estimate that at least 1500 women have been denied essential services since then. When we consider the negative effects on children and families, the number of lives affected has been multiplied manyfold. Since 2009, they have not received therapeutic programs, the ability to reunite and form bonds with their children, job training, jobs. Instead, as one formerly incarcerated woman testified, DPSCS staff dropped her off alone at a transit station, with nothing but \$50 and a bag of condoms.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

Maryland's incarcerated women need the pre-release center now. The lack of pre-release services affects every family and community into which a formerly incarcerated woman is released. Accordingly, for the reasons outlined in the The Women's Pre-Release Equity Coalition's written testimony, WDC strongly supports SB187 with these proposed amendments:

1. Remove the 1-mile radius restriction set forth in Section 3-301(b)(1)(II).
2. Add "MAXIMUM" between "1.25" and "TIMES" in Section 3-301(b)(2).
3. Add "AND SHALL BE FULLY TRANSFERRED TO SUCH FACILITY UPON COMPLETION OF FINAL CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION." to the end of Section 3-303(b)(2).
4. Add a new Subsection 3-303(b)(3) to require DPSCS to provide gender-responsive pre-release services at what DPSCS calls the Life Skills and Re-Entry Center for Women and prohibit DPSCS from requiring women to receive those services at a correctional facility housing men, at a correctional facility incarcerating individuals who are not eligible for pre-release status, or at a different correctional facility for women.
5. Restore the subtitle, "The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act."

Thanks to the action of this legislature in prior sessions, planning and design for the facility is fully funded. Passage of SB187 with the Coalition's proposed amendments will not affect the state's budget for three fiscal years.

WDC is grateful to the Maryland General Assembly for passing the Gender-Responsive Pre-Release Act in 2021 over Governor Hogan's veto, and we are equally appreciative that the General Assembly has staunchly insisted on full funding for the Women's Pre-Release Center since the Act passed. This Committee must not waver in that commitment.

We urge a favorable Committee vote on SB187, with the amendments proposed by the Women's Pre-Release Equity Coalition. We further urge this Committee to bring this legislation to a vote and to move the amended bill to the Budget and Taxation Committee as quickly as possible.

Maryland's incarcerated women have waited far too long for the facility and services they need for a successful transition back into their families and our communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Rubinstein
WDC President

Kate Stein
WDC Advocacy Chair

Braveheart_TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 187.pdf

Uploaded by: T. Shekhinah Braveheart

Position: FWA

Women's Prerelease Equity Coalition

TESTIMONY BY T. SHEKHINAH BRAVEHEART

Senate Bill 187

Correctional Services – Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services – Female Incarcerated Individuals

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 187, legislation that takes a vital and long-overdue step toward ensuring incarcerated women in Maryland receive effective, gender-responsive prerelease services that support successful reentry, strengthen families, and enhance public safety.

I submit this testimony as an executive member of the Women's Prerelease Equity Coalition, a group dedicated to addressing systemic gaps in prerelease and reentry services for women. We respectfully request that the Committee issue a **favorable report on SB 187 with amendments**.

Why SB 187 Matters

Women are the fastest-growing incarcerated population nationwide, yet correctional systems—including Maryland's—have traditionally been structured and invested around men's needs. Consequently, women often leave incarceration without access to prerelease services that address their lived realities, including:

- High rates of trauma, domestic violence, and sexual abuse
- Primary caregiving responsibilities for children and family members
- Significant health, behavioral health, and substance use treatment needs
- Barriers to housing, meaningful employment, and family reunification upon release

These gaps result from a system that has failed to plan for women's reentry. **SB 187 corrects this inequity**, and I urge this Committee to uphold the Maryland General Assembly's earlier promise to provide fair women's pre-release services and facilities. This facility must be built now, and it must be built properly.

Women in MCI-W have lacked adequate pre-release services for over 16 years. The absence of a women's pre-release center in Maryland continues to violate the protections of the 14th Amendment and the Maryland Equal Rights Act. As Supreme Court case law states, the cost of fixing an Equal Protection violation does not excuse a state from doing so. Since closing the Baltimore Pre-Release Unit for Women at the end of 2009, DPSCS has been saving money at women's expense. It is long overdue for DPSCS to reinvest those funds into supporting women.

Lived Experience and Consequences of the Current System

A currently incarcerated woman shared the following experience with our coalition, which illustrates the real-world consequences of Maryland's failure to provide adequate prerelease services for women:

She stated that she has served a harsher sentence solely because Maryland lacks an effective prerelease facility for women. While waiting for her release, she has been kept on a compound with individuals who are not eligible for prerelease and has been assaulted twice. She is set to be released in about two months and expects to leave incarceration with little more than a nominal discharge payment and no meaningful transition support.

She explained that if a community-based prerelease facility had been available—as promised years ago—she would have been able to work, save money, and meaningfully prepare for reentry. Instead, she will return to the community without employment history, housing stability, or structured support, despite having demonstrated readiness for transition.

The lack of prerelease access also caused severe consequences for her family. While she was incarcerated, her six-year-old son—her only child—had to undergo open-heart surgery while in foster care. Because no community-based prerelease placement was available, she couldn't visit him for months and was completely absent from his life during a crucial medical and developmental time. She received a court-ordered visit only days before Thanksgiving.

As she described it, she is confident she will survive upon release—but survival is not success. Without proper preparation, women are forced to simultaneously find housing, employment, meet supervision requirements, reunite with their children, and address untreated trauma. Too often, the lack of structured prerelease support causes women to return to substance use or the very circumstances that led them into the system.

This experience is not unique. It is the predictable outcome of a system that releases women without the tools necessary to succeed.

While SB187 includes some key provisions I support, it also has several flaws that need to be addressed through the amendments detailed in the Women Prerelease Equity Coalition's written testimony.

Maryland has an opportunity to address a longstanding structural inequality and fulfill its obligation to prepare incarcerated women for successful reentry. Therefore, I respectfully urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report with amendments on SB 187. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

T. Shekhinah Braveheart

Executive Member

Women's Prerelease Equity Coalition

Jacobs Testimony on Maryland SB 0187 - 01.23.26.pd

Uploaded by: T. Shekhinah Braveheart

Position: FWA

Testimony on Maryland SB 0187

Submitted by Ann Jacobs

January 23, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 0187, and for the sustained work by legislators and advocates to address the longstanding inequities in pre-release services for women in Maryland.

I offer this testimony based on more than fifty years of working across the criminal legal continuum—beginning in halfway houses and jails in Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, and extending to correctional facilities, alternatives to incarceration, and community-based reentry programs along the East Coast. My work with the Annie E. Casey Foundation focused on improving outcomes for children impacted by parental incarceration by building bridges between the child welfare and corrections systems. I led the Women’s Prison Association in New York as well as the John Jay College Institute for Justice and Opportunity (formerly the Prisoner Reentry Institute).

My goal has always been the same—to aid people in moving beyond survival by building the skills, supports, and knowledge needed to lead stable, purposeful, and connected lives in the community.

I recognize the operational and political constraints under which Maryland is operating, and I believe this is a moment to do more than authorize a facility. It is an opportunity to set expectations—and to open the door to practices that will enable women to build robust lives for themselves in the community.

Location matters. Pre-release facilities work best when they’re situated in the communities to which women will return. That means access to services, transportation, and employment—and also accessibility for family and loved ones. Facilities should be designed to support visitation in safe, welcoming spaces, not as a privilege but as a core part of reentry preparation.

Successful reentry also requires active coordination with other systems. Women will need to navigate housing, health care, mental health and substance use treatment, child welfare, education, employment, and parole—often all at once. Facilities need to be accessible and welcoming to professionals from those systems, with streamlined entry protocols, designated meeting space, and a culture that recognizes this cross-system work as essential to success. The more those connections are built before release, the more stable the transition will be.

Digital access and fluency are essential. In today’s world, reintegration requires more than a release plan—it requires digital functionality. Women need to be able to apply for jobs, use email, manage appointments, access benefits, and navigate services online. Yet many have had little or no opportunity to develop or retain these skills in prison. A pre-release setting should provide access to computers and the internet, along with the structured support to help women

practice using these tools. Digital literacy is now as fundamental as budgeting or showing up for appointments—it's part of what makes independent life possible. Phone access at no cost to families and providers remains important as well, but it is not a substitute for full digital engagement.

Design matters. Even within a locked facility, pre-release must look and feel different than traditional incarceration. Design, staffing, daily routines, and technology policies all signal whether the goal is institutional compliance or preparation for real-world living. When done well, pre-release allows women to begin exercising autonomy—working, communicating, managing time, and reconnecting with their support networks—while still benefiting from guidance and accountability. Furloughs should be an integral part of the step-down process.

I appreciate Maryland's renewed commitment to establishing a pre-release facility for women. I encourage the Committee to view SB 0187 not only as a vehicle for construction, but as a statement of how we prepare people for return: by reconnecting them to the world they will reenter, and ensuring they have the relationships, tools, and experience to stay and succeed there.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Jacobs
ajacobs1094@gmail.com

Women's Prerelease Equity Coalition Testimony JPR-

Uploaded by: T. Shekhinah Braveheart

Position: FWA

WOMEN'S PRE-RELEASE EQUITY COALITION

Hearing on Senate Bill 0187 – Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals January 28, 2026 FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

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

FROM: Maryland Women's Prerelease Equity Coalition

Thank you for this opportunity for the **Women's Pre-Release Equity Coalition** to submit written testimony urging a Favorable with Amendments report on SB187. This Coalition, comprised of justice-focused organizations and directly impacted individuals, has been working since 2018 to ensure that Maryland's incarcerated women receive equitable pre-release services at a pre-release facility dedicated solely to their needs.

In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly overrode the Governor's veto to pass, on a bi-partisan basis, the Gender-Responsive Pre-Release Act ("the Act"), which required the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services ("DCSPS") to:

- open and operate a pre-release center for women;
- do so in or adjacent to the zip code where most released women will be returning; and
- provide educational, occupational, parenting/family reunification, and therapeutic and substance use programming that is gender-responsive, trauma-informed, and evidence-based.

Adjusting for the delay attributable to the veto override, the Act required DPSCS to open the women's pre-release center by the end of 2023. Citing unspecified delays, DPSCS has indicated that construction will not begin until FY2029 and that the facility will not open until FY2031.

As this Coalition testified last session on SB632 (The Monica Cooper Pre-release Act), DPSCS's plans for the women's pre-release center, now known as the "Life Skills and Re-Entry Center for Women" ("LSRCW") are unacceptable. Unlike during the process for drafting the filed version of SB632, the Coalition was not involved in drafting SB187. While SB187 contains some important provisions the Coalition supports, it also suffers from several deficiencies that must be remedied through the following amendments:

1. Remove the 1-mile radius restriction set forth in Section 3-301(b)(1)(II). This provision unnecessarily limits the possible locations for the LSRCW. DPSCS proposes locating the LSRCW at 717 Forrest Street, Baltimore, on a .97-acre site within the Baltimore Pretrial and Detention Center Complex. The site is much too small to accommodate the facility and adequate outdoor space, and according to veteran correctional officers, is unsafe for family visitation and for the women themselves, is plagued by drug trafficking, and will doom the women to failure. The Coalition suggests that the provision be amended to read "(II) NOT LOCATED IN OR ADJACENT TO THE AREA OF BALTIMORE CITY BOUNDED BY E. MONUMENT STREET, E. EAGER STREET, JONES FALL TRAIL, MCKIM STREET, AND HOMEWOOD AVENUE."
2. Add "MAXIMUM" between "1.25" and "TIMES" in Section 3-301(b)(2). The current "Program Plan Parts I and II" sets the LSRCW's bed capacity at 64. This is an

WOMEN'S PRE-RELEASE EQUITY COALITION

insufficient number of beds. The Department of Legislative Services has questioned the 64-bed capacity in its Capital Budget Analyses for this project, noting that the number of incarcerated women has reached pre-COVID levels and is expected to rise. While Section 3-301(b)(2) helps remedy this insufficiency, it is ambiguous, since the cited report included monthly population statistics, rather than a single identifiable number. The Coalition stands by the principle that every woman in pre-release status who wants to live at the LSRCW should be able to do so. Using the 1.25 multiplier for the maximum number reported accounts for predicted future population growth and periodic population spikes. If the facility is too small, women in pre-release status who would otherwise be eligible to transfer to the LSRCW will remain in the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women ("MCI-W") in contravention of the Gender-Responsive Pre-release Act.

3. Add "AND SHALL BE FULLY TRANSFERRED TO SUCH FACILITY UPON COMPLETION OF FINAL CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION." to the end of Section 3-303(b)(2). This language will ensure that the pre-release services required to be provided at MCI-W before the final construction of the LSRCW are transferred to LSRCW once that facility opens. The Coalition fears that, without the mandatory transfer requirement, DPSCS will argue that no women's pre-release center is necessary because adequate services are provided at MCI-W. Indeed, DPSCS Secretary Scruggs has already begun lobbying Coalition and General Assembly members to this effect. Secretary Scruggs' assertions are countered by 198 women incarcerated at MCI-W (more than one-third of the population), who responded to a letter asking for their views on pre-release services at MCI-W. The respondents were clear that the pre-release services at MCI-W are not adequate, and they want the women's pre-release center built, although not in the Pretrial and Detention Center Complex. On this point, we also remind the Committee that throughout the Program Plan Parts I and II, and in deliberative documentation, DGS noted that prerelease cannot be effectively carried out from within a maximum-security prison. The recognition of this reality is the reason the Maryland General Assembly passed the Gender-Responsive Pre-release Act in 2021. We also remind the Committee that no men in pre-release status (or in minimum or work-release status, for that matter) are housed behind bars in a maximum-security prison, which allows men a range of opportunities that women in a maximum-security prison can never have.
4. Add a new Subsection 3-303(b)(3) to require DPSCS to provide gender-responsive pre-release services at the LSRCW and prohibit DPSCS from requiring women to receive those services at a correctional facility housing men, at a correctional facility housing incarcerated individuals who are not eligible for prerelease status, or at a different correctional facility for women. This is necessary because the current Program Plan Parts I and II call for therapeutic services for the women at the LSRCW to be provided at the proposed Baltimore Therapeutic and Treatment Center, which is completely inappropriate for a population of women in pre-release status and violates accepted norms of gender-responsive, trauma-informed programming. New Subsection 3-303(b)(3) should read: "(3) THE SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION SHALL BE FULLY PROVIDED AT THE FACILITY REQUIRED UNDER [SECTION] 3-301 OF THIS SUBTITLE, AND ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO OBTAIN THOSE SERVICES AT ANY OTHER CORRECTIONAL FACILITY."
5. Restore the subtitle "The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act" that was included in the title of SB632. In 2016, Monica Cooper, a formerly incarcerated woman, initiated the effort to

WOMEN'S PRE-RELEASE EQUITY COALITION

reopen a pre-release center for Maryland's incarcerated women and then, in 2018, she co-founded the Women's Pre-release Equity Coalition. Although many Marylanders have supported this effort since the Coalition's founding, the work began with Monica Cooper, and her efforts to right a glaring injustice should be recognized.

The Coalition urges this Committee to hold fast to the Maryland General Assembly's earlier commitment to ensure equitable women's pre-release services and facilities and report favorably on SB187 with the above amendments. This facility needs to be built, it needs to be built now, and it needs to be built right. Women in MCI-W have gone without adequate pre-release services for over 16 years. This facility will not require additional funding for at least two fiscal years because, in addition to passing the Gender-Responsive Pre-release Act, the Maryland General Assembly fully funded this project through the completion of design. DPSCS personnel testified in the 2025 session that those funds have not been encumbered or spent. Furthermore, we note that DGS selected a good site and completed the first Program Parts I and II for this facility within five (5) months of receiving a site-acquisition request from former DPSCS Secretary Robert Green. We are confident that, with diligent effort, it can do so again.

The lack of a women's pre-release center in Maryland is an ongoing violation of the Equal Protection guarantees set forth in the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution, as well as in the Maryland Equal Rights Act. As Supreme Court case law makes clear, the cost of remedying an Equal Protection violation does not excuse a state from remedying the violation. Since it closed the Baltimore Pre-Release Unit for Women at the end of 2009, DPSCS has been saving money on the backs of women in pre-release status. It is past time for DCSPS to reinvest that money in those women.

Like the Corrections Officers with whom we have spoken, we believe that the current plans will doom the women to failure and will be a waste of taxpayer money. SB187, with the Coalition's proposed amendments, would ensure that this facility for women will be done right, something DPSCS has proven it will not do on its own.

The Women's Prerelease Equity Coalition is grateful for the Committee's continued support of this important project.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryland Justice Project

Women's Law Center of Maryland

Maryland NOW

ACLU of Maryland

AFSCME Council 3

Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club

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North Avenue Task Force

Jews United for Justice

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WOMEN'S PRE-RELEASE EQUITY COALITION

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Professor Leigh Goodmark and
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(testimony submitted on behalf
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Francis King Carey School of
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Fanchon Burton

Arneisha Butler

Caitlin Cabit

Evelin Cabrera

Fredreka Caldwell

Tiffany Carr

Anna Caruso

Deshawna Chainey

Daeshauna Chaney

Mary Chider

Heather Clark

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Nancy Coal

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Jermika Collins

Jasmine Conaway

Olershi Conoway

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Tiara Cromwell

Cerria Curtis

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Rachael Johnson
Shannon Johnson
Cerease Jones
Jasmine Jones
Jasmine L. Jones
Mikayla Jones
Myeisha Jones
Shanikqua Jones
Besline Joseph
Angel Jury
Karen McAllister
Kerri Killion
Kimberly King
Kimberly King
Casey Kline
Jessica Latin
Alicia Lawson
Shatika Lawson
Kenika Leach
Jacqueline Leatherberry
Laquesia Lewis
Kimberly Lierly
Adriana Locklear
Amanda Macadoo
Jamie Marshall
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Niaja McLot
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Karen Medliodes
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Shakierah Miller
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Jalesa Offer
Sheila Ortiz
Olera Osara
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Ashley Ownes
Letitia Palmer
LaKeeyia Pixley
Julie Plants
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Brittany Powers
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Heather Ward
Nickole Washington
Tswana Watkins
Charlene Weddle
Reginay While
Crishon White
Shanti Williams
Tinesha Williams
Charonda Wilson
Dazier Wilson
Nadine Wilson
Rosa Wilson
Amanda Wright
Chiquita Skeeters
Adrianna Smith
Kristen Smith
Latina Rose Smith
Melissa Smith
Shawntierra Smith
Shawn Yea Sparkman
Shana Stansberry
Nicole Sullivan

Women's Prerelease Equity Coalition Testimony JPR-

Uploaded by: T. Shekhinah Braveheart

Position: FWA

WOMEN'S PRE-RELEASE EQUITY COALITION

Hearing on Senate Bill 0187 – Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals January 28, 2026 FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

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

FROM: Maryland Women's Prerelease Equity Coalition

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Professor Leigh Goodmark and
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Carey School of Law Gender,
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(testimony submitted on behalf
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Evelin Cabrera

Fredreka Caldwell

Tiffany Carr

Anna Caruso

Deshawna Chainey

Daeshauna Chaney

Mary Chider

Heather Clark

Janai Clark

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Alice Collins

Jermika Collins

Jasmine Conaway

Olershi Conoway

Markia Copeland

Tiara Cromwell

Cerria Curtis

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Ashley Davis
Cachet Davis
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Shayla Dorman
Deidra Douglas
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Cynthia Downs
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Sabrina Evans
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Jasmine Jones
Jasmine L. Jones
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Angel Jury
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Kerri Killion
Kimberly King
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Jessica Latin
Alicia Lawson
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Kenika Leach
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Kimberly Lierly
Adriana Locklear
Amanda Macadoo
Jamie Marshall
Ashley Mayor
Alisha McCoy
Niaja McLot
Maria Gloria Vaquez Mebo
Karen Medliodes
Ashley Miller
Shakierah Miller
Lucrisha Mints
Alethea Mitchell
Celena Modosie
Heather Mongan
Briasia Morris
Michelle Moss

WOMEN'S PRE-RELEASE EQUITY COALITION

Katherine Muldron
Helene Newsome
Theresa Niall
Destiny Nickelson
Lindsey Nilson
Lenore Nivens
Ashley Nolan
Brittany Norwood
Jalesa Offer
Sheila Ortiz
Olera Osara
Marquise Owens
Ashley Ownes
Letitia Palmer
LaKeeyia Pixley
Julie Plants
Vida Poole
Britney Powers
Brittany Powers
Stephanie Randall
Christina Rather
Elva Reid
Tonya Riffs
Satrina Roberts
Takala Robinson
Tonya Rollins
Heather Rostek
Courtney Roy
Lily Scaggs
Emily Schultz
Alexis Scott
Saquon Scruggs
Lisa Seabolt
Laura Shatzer
Brittany Shipp
Tenasha Siena

Annette Sutton
Dominique Taylor
Trish Taylor
Aja Terry
Kyonta Terry
Marina Thomas
Catherine Thornton
Markeen Townsend
Roshanek Townsend
Leslie Two
Kimberly Tyler
Kyashia Walker
Diandra Ward
Heather Ward
Nickole Washington
Tswana Watkins
Charlene Weddle
Reginay While
Crishon White
Shanti Williams
Tinesha Williams
Charonda Wilson
Dazier Wilson
Nadine Wilson
Rosa Wilson
Amanda Wright
Chiquita Skeeters
Adrianna Smith
Kristen Smith
Latina Rose Smith
Melissa Smith
Shawntierra Smith
Shawn Yea Sparkman
Shana Stansberry
Nicole Sullivan

WOMEN'S PRE-RELEASE EQUITY COALITION

SB 187_Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Ser

Uploaded by: Jason Davidson

Position: INFO



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of Government & Legislative Affairs

BILL: SENATE BILL 187

POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

EXPLANATION: Senate Bill 187 seeks to eliminate the requirement to place a prerelease unit for women located in or adjacent to the zip codes where the largest percentage of incarcerated individuals will likely be released.

SB 187 provides that a prerelease unit be located in Baltimore City on a site that is no less than 3 acres and not within a 1-mile radius of an existing correctional facility. Additionally, a prerelease unit shall accommodate services for no fewer than 1.25 times the number of women who were eligible for prerelease status in 2024. Finally, the Department is required to provide gender-responsive services to eligible individuals prior to the final construction and occupation of the facility.

- After careful consideration of several locations, DPSCS, along with the Department of General Services (DGS) chose a site for the prerelease center for women also known as the New Life Skills and Reentry Center (LSRCW) that complies with the 2020 legislation and has been making significant progress on the project.
- The bidding process for the architecture and design was completed by early Fall 2025.
- Upon approval of the architecture and design by the Board of Public Works, the design of the prerelease unit would be currently underway and projected to issue a notice to proceed with construction by November 2028.
- The Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act (SB 684, Chapter 16, 2020) passed in March 2020, as an unfunded mandate and is now fully funded at the estimated cost of \$107 million.
- DPSCS and the DGS convened a meeting with leaders of the Women's Prerelease Equity Coalition and formerly justice impacted women in November 2025 to discuss concerns over the location of the LSRCW.

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GOVERNOR

ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR

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SECRETARY

JOSEPH SEDTAL
DEPUTY SECRETARY
ADMINISTRATION

ANNIE D. HARVEY
DEPUTY SECRETARY
OPERATIONS

ANGELINA GUARINO
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
DATA, POLICY AND GRANTS

RENARD BROOKS

- As a result, the planned construction for the prerelease center to be located at 717 Forrest St., has been temporarily paused due to concerns of the Women's Prerelease Equity Coalition regarding the location.
- Relocating the LSRCW to a location at least 1-mile away from a correctional facility and on property of no less than 3 acres in size, will most likely result in additional funding needed to complete the project and complicate the search for a suitable site.
- Prior to the selection of the current location, there was a suitable site for the facility on the west side of the city, but local community groups collaborated to block construction after learning about the plan.
- Additionally, a new site for the LSRCW could lead to opposition by the surrounding community.
- In addition to the costs of searching for and purchasing a new property, the new timeline is at least 24 months to secure a new site. Upon acquisition of the site, the planning process will need to start over from the beginning.
- Furthermore, the requirement to accommodate services for no fewer than 1.25 times the number of women who were eligible for prerelease status in 2024 will increase costs for the LSRCW as it will require additional bed space.
- It is important to note that the incarcerated population is not static and fluctuates based on releases and new intakes. The appropriate methodology should be 1.25 times the daily average pre-release population. This would amount to a capacity of 103 beds.
- The prerelease population for incarcerated women has been in steady decline from 165 incarcerated women in 2016 to 86 in 2025.
- In addition, the bill requires gender responsive programming be provided to meet the specific needs of incarcerated women with prerelease status. However, all incarcerated women housed at MCIW have specific needs that should be addressed prior to release.
- It is important to note that prerelease is a security classification for incarcerated individuals who pose the least risk of violence and escape, and have a history of satisfactory institutional behavior.

- Gender responsive programming is provided to all incarcerated women in all security classifications, not just prerelease as women are released from maximum, medium, minimum security classifications.
- It is beneficial and important for incarcerated women, in all security classification, to engage in programming together as it provides a safe and supportive and therapeutic environment. Collaborative programming helps to foster trust, build pro-social skills, and reduce the psychological stress of incarceration.
- In FY25, 156 incarcerated women were released from MCIW from maximum, medium and minimum security classifications versus 85 who were classified as prerelease.
- In compliance with the Gender Response Reprerlease Act, Project FRESH was established which is a specialized, gender-responsive program dedicated to providing comprehensive support both during incarceration and after release.
- This comprehensive approach addresses a wide range of reentry needs—including employment, housing, behavioral health, and life skills—providing a stable foundation for successful reintegration into the community.
- In addition to the Project FRESH programming, incarcerated women housed on the prerelease unit have access to a range of reentry focused programming available throughout the facility, including a baby bonding program, which allows mothers with children aged 3 and under to engage in special visits in a nursery environment, promoting bonding and healthy attachment.
- DPSCS hosted representatives of the Montgomery County Women’s Democratic Club at the MCIW and the Dorsey Run Correctional Facility for a tour of the variety of programming and resources provided at the prerelease housing units for both men and women.
- Additional gender responsive programs are expected to be added during the course of the year.

CONCLUSION: For these reasons, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as it deliberates Senate Bill 187.

SB 187 - Letter of Information - Womens Prerelease

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: INFO

Senate Bill 187 - Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals

Position: Letter of Information

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings and Budget and Taxation Committees

Date: January 28, 2026

From: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Department of General Services (DGS) takes no position on Senate Bill 187 and is providing this Letter of Information for the Committee's consideration.

This legislation proposes significant revisions to state law governing the establishment of a comprehensive rehabilitative prerelease unit for women operated by the Division of Corrections within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS).

This bill would mandate that the facility be located in Baltimore City on a site that is not less than 3 acres and not located within a one-mile radius of an existing correctional facility, and satisfy specified requirements for housing capacity and programming. In addition, at the request of DPSCS, DGS would be required to review and evaluate proposals for locations satisfying the bill's new standards and to award a contract to a provider as soon as practicable.

DGS must emphasize the challenges posed by the bill's mandates to select and procure a new site and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the design and construction of a facility on this new site by August 1, 2026. Major challenges to issuing an RFP by this deadline include the feasibility of obtaining a site meeting the bill's requirements, including the provision of site acquisition costs, the necessary intergovernmental coordination with the City of Baltimore, and the extensive community engagement involved in the siting of a new correctional facility.

If Senate Bill 187 becomes law, DGS would necessarily add space, scope, and detailed descriptions contained in Part I and II project plans, and commence contracting to plan the newly redefined and resited project. In order to restart this project, DPSCS will also need to acquire a new property, with the DGS's Office of Real Estate (ORE) providing direct support to DPSCS for the necessary property acquisition that meets the new siting requirements.

Given the constraints of available land meeting these new standards, it may be a property owned by the City of Baltimore. The City has its own comprehensive land acquisition and development process, which includes mandatory community engagement. This process alone can take upwards of six months, assuming the property is approved for acquisition. Once the property is secured, DPSCS and DGS must complete the programming process, which establishes the design and operational requirements for the facility. This takes a minimum of 90 days before the project can advance to the RFP stage.

While DGS will work diligently to implement SB187 if passed, these factors may mean we will not be able to meet the timelines identified.

The current law was enacted in 2021 by veto override (SB 684, 2020; enacted as Ch. 16, Feb. 11, 2021). Following the DPSCS request to initiate the project, and the inclusion in the State Budget of funding for planning and design costs, DGS has been devoting the professional resources of the department's Division of Design, Construction and Energy to complete this project in the most expeditious manner possible.

In accordance with existing statute, the project will require the construction of a building to serve as a standalone prerelease facility for incarcerated women. The proposed site for the project is located at 717 Forrest Street in Baltimore City. The new facility is planned to contain four housing units and able to accommodate 64 residents. The facility will include common residential areas within each housing unit, dedicated visitation and programming space, an integrated healthcare clinic, and various administrative and general support spaces. The goal of the project is to provide a secure, therapeutic, and rehabilitative environment for women in prerelease to support their future success. State construction funding is allocated in future years in the Capital Improvement Program.

In conclusion, whether this project proceeds under current law or the new parameters of Senate Bill 187, DGS will continue to be fully engaged and responsive to the General Assembly's efforts to ensure that female incarcerated individuals have access to the necessary gender-responsive services and resources for a successful transition back into the community.

Again, DGS is providing this testimony for informational purposes, and the Department looks forward to being of further assistance as the Committee considers this bill.

Contact: John R. Woolums, Esq., Director of Government and Legislative Affairs,
(410) 260-2908 (O), (667) 434-0008 (M), john.woolums@maryland

2026_01_27 SB 187 Comprehensive Rehabilitative Pre

Uploaded by: Tiffany Clark

Position: INFO

CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI
Chief Deputy Attorney General

LEONARD J. HOWIE III
Deputy Attorney General

CARRIE J. WILLIAMS
Deputy Attorney General

SHARON S. MERRIWEATHER
Deputy Attorney General

ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY
Deputy Attorney General



PETER V. BERNS
General Counsel

CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA
Chief of Staff

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

January 27, 2026

TO: The Honorable William Smith
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Tiffany Clark
Director, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: Senate Bill 187 – Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative
Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports **Senate Bill 187 – Prerelease Unit for Women – Establishment and Services** in concept, with the amendments described below. SB 187 proposes to establish a comprehensive prerelease facility for incarcerated women in Baltimore City, providing rehabilitative services to support successful community reintegration.

As Maryland's elected Chief Legal Officer, the Attorney General supervises and directs the legal business of the State. The Office of the Attorney General advises and represents State institutions, agencies, boards, commissions, and officials, while representing Maryland's interests in state and federal litigation. The Office uses the authority of the Office to enforce the rule of law, protect Marylanders, and promote the public good.

We appreciate the intent of this legislation to address systemic challenges faced by incarcerated women, particularly women of color, as they transition back into their communities. This bill aligns with the Maryland Equity and Justice Commission (MEJC) Recommendation #12, which calls for expanding and improving community-based reentry programming. The legislation takes important steps toward closing reentry service gaps, reducing racial disparities, and fostering sustainable reintegration.

However, we note that several critical service provisions included in SB 632 from the 2025 session have been removed from the current version. To ensure effective implementation and

meaningful support for incarcerated women's successful reentry, we respectfully recommend restoring the following provisions:

1. **Public Health Benefits Assistance:** Mandate screening and application assistance for Medicaid, SNAP, and other public benefits prior to release.
2. **Stable Housing Guarantee:** Require provision of stable housing for at least one year post-release, addressing a primary barrier to successful reintegration.
3. **Document Procurement:** Ensure acquisition of essential identification documents including birth certificates, state-issued identification, and Social Security cards before release.
4. **Education, Training, and Employment Engagement:** Require active participation in educational, vocational, or employment programming as part of prerelease services.
5. **Transportation Protections:** Prohibit requiring women to be transported to co-educational facilities to access services that should be available at the prerelease unit.
6. **Annual Reporting:** Restore the Social Work Unit's annual reporting requirement to ensure transparency and program accountability.
7. **Performance Incentive Funding:** Reinstate the \$500,000 Performance Incentive Grant Fund to support evidence-based programming and measurable outcomes.

With these amendments, this legislation will provide comprehensive, gender-responsive support that addresses the full spectrum of challenges incarcerated women face during reentry, from securing basic documentation and housing to accessing healthcare and employment opportunities. We have shared these recommendations with the bill sponsor and remain available to work collaboratively with the Committee to refine this legislation.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General respectfully urges the Committee to give SB 187 a favorable report with the amendments described above.

Cc: