

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 697
Judiciary

(Delegate Grammer, *et al.*)

Correctional Services - Diminution of a Term of Confinement

This bill prohibits an incarcerated individual who is serving a sentence for murder in the first degree, that occurred on or after October 1, 2026, in a State or local correctional facility (pre-sentence or post-sentence) from earning diminution credits to reduce the incarcerated individual's term of confinement.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect State operations or finances in the near term. In the future, general fund expenditures increase, potentially significantly over time, for the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services as individuals serve longer terms of confinement under the bill, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Offenders sentenced for violent crimes typically are not sentenced to local correctional facilities; therefore, local finances are not anticipated to be materially affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Generally, incarcerated individuals sentenced to a State correctional facility are entitled to earn diminution of confinement credits to reduce the lengths of their incarcerations. Individuals sentenced for a "crime of violence" earn diminution credits at a lower rate than other incarcerated individuals. The following types of incarcerated individuals may not earn diminution credits:

- an incarcerated individual who is serving a sentence for first- or second-degree rape against a victim younger than 16;

- an incarcerated individual who is serving a sentence for first- or second-degree sexual offense, as the offenses existed before October 1, 2017, against a victim younger than 16;
- an incarcerated individual who is serving a sentence for a subsequent conviction of third-degree sexual offense against a victim younger than 16;
- an incarcerated individual imprisoned for a lifetime sexual offender supervision violation; and
- an incarcerated individual who is serving a sentence for first-degree rape that occurred on or after October 1, 2024.

Diminution credits are deducted from an incarcerated individual’s “term of confinement,” which is defined as (1) the length of the sentence, for a single sentence or (2) the period from the first day of the sentence that begins first through the last day of the sentence that ends last, for concurrent sentences, partially concurrent sentences, consecutive sentences, or a combination of concurrent and consecutive sentences.

Diminution credits are made for good conduct, work tasks, education, and special projects or programs. For additional information on diminution credits, see the [Maryland Diminution Credit System](#) report published by the Department of Legislative Services in December 2025.

State Expenditures: Although the bill does not materially affect State finances over the five-year period covered by this fiscal and policy note, general fund incarceration expenditures increase in the future as individuals serve longer terms of confinement due to the bill’s changes.

Persons serving a sentence longer than 18 months are incarcerated in State correctional facilities. Currently, the average total cost per incarcerated individual, including overhead, is estimated at \$5,838 per month. Excluding overhead, the average cost of housing a new State incarcerated individual (including health care costs) is about \$1,942 per month. Excluding all health care (which is a fixed cost under the current contract), the average variable costs total \$324 per month.

For context, in fiscal 2025, the Division of Correction reports that there were 99 individuals sentenced for first-degree murder offenses. Although a reliable estimate of the total increase in State incarceration costs cannot be made, the impact could eventually be significant considering the cumulative impact over time as individuals sentenced for applicable offenses after October 1, 2026, remain in State facilities for longer terms of confinement due to the bill’s changes regarding diminution credits.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. HB 374 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Frederick, Montgomery, and Somerset counties; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of Legislative Services

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caw/lgc

Analysis by: Shirleen M. E. Pilgrim

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510